

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND  
TO THE BAPTISM OF RUS'  
BYZANTINE-RUSSIAN RELATIONS  
BETWEEN 986-89

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AS the well-known Byzantinist Fjodor Uspenskij observed in his oration, "Rus' and Byzantium in the 10th Century," written for the nine-hundredth anniversary of the Russian acceptance of Christianity, everything concerning the events of the years 988–89 "still lies under the seal of mystery, which the historian, with present scientific means, is hardly in a position to break."<sup>1</sup> Although there has been no basic improvement in scientific methods, attempts are still being made to paint a picture of these momentous events.

## I. The Conversion of Rus' to Christianity as Presented in Modern Historical Writing

I shall present a brief and slightly simplified account of the modern historian's version of the introduction of Rus' into the family of Christian nations, taken as an episode in the history of Russo-Byzantine relations.<sup>2</sup> In general, the story goes as follows:

In September 987, the rebellious general Bardas Phocas proclaimed himself emperor. The usurper, marching on Constantinople, was recognized by all of Asia Minor. The situation of the legitimate Emperor Basil II was desperate and he asked the Russian ruler Vladimir for help, sending an embassy which arrived in Kiev in the winter of 987/88. As Vladimir had already manifested an interest in Christianity some time before, Basil's envoys were prepared to discuss the affairs of both Church and State. The agreement which was reached

<sup>1</sup> F. I. Uspenskij, *Rus' i Vizantija v X v.* (Odessa, 1888), 35.

<sup>2</sup> A survey of studies and an ample bibliography are to be found in the following works: basic for the nineteenth century are the discourses by E. Golubinskij (*Istorija ruskoj cerkvi* [hereafter, Golubinskij, *Istorija*], I, pt. 1 [Moscow, 1880; rep. 1901] 105–80); V. G. Vasil'evsky, *Trudy*, I (St. Petersburg, 1908), 196–210, and II (1909), 56–124 (hereafter, Vasil'evsky, *Trudy*, I and II); and V. R. Rozen (in his commentary on the History of Yahyā, *Imperator' Vasilij Bolgarobojca. Izvlečenija iz' l'etopisi Jah'i antiohijskago* [St. Petersburg, 1883] [hereafter, Rozen, *Imperator*], 194–216). A clear and concise exposition consistent with the state of research at the beginning of the twentieth century, along with a short survey of literature and sources, is given by M. Gruševskij, in *Istorija Ukrajin-Rusi*, I (Kiev, 1913; rep. New York, 1954), 495–515, 572–78. Among subsequent studies and recent general works, the following should be mentioned: E. Šmurlo, "Kogda i gde krestilsja Vladimir Svjatoj," *Zapiski Russkogo Istoričeskogo Obščestva v Prage* (Prague, 1927) (hereafter, Šmurlo, "Kogda"), 120–48; S. V. Bahrušyn, "K voprusu o kreščenii Kievskoj Rusi," *Istorič-Marksist* (1937), pt. 2, pp. 40–77; G. Ostrogorskij, "Vladimir Svjatoj i Vizantija," *Vladimirskij Sbornik* (Belgrade, 1938), 31–40; M. V. Levčenko, "Vzaimootnošenija Vizantii i Rusi pri Vladimire," *VizVrem*, N.S. 7 (1953), 194–223; *idem*, *Očerki po istorii rusko-vizantijskikh otnošenij* (Moscow, 1956) (hereafter, Levčenko, *Očerki*), 340–85; I. Ševčenko, "The Christianization of Kievan Rus," *The Polish Review*, 5 (1960), 4, 29–35; G. G. Litavrin, in *Istorija Vizantii*, II (Moscow, 1967), 219, 235–36; V. T. Pašuto, *Vnešnjaia politika drevnej Rusi* (Moscow, 1968), 73–77, 316–17; G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick, N. J., 1969), 303–5; A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom* (Cambridge, 1970) (hereafter, Vlasto, *Entry*), 255–62; F. Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions Among the Slavs* (New Brunswick, N. J., 1970), 270–72; D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe 500–1453* (London, 1971) (hereafter, Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*), 192–201; H. Grégoire, in *CMH*, IV, pt. 1 (1966), 179–80; M. N. Tihomirov, "The Origins of Christianity in Russia," *History*, N.S., *The Quarterly Journal of the Historical Association*, London, vol. 44, no. 152 (1959), 199–211.

provided military support for Basil; in return, Vladimir was to receive the hand of the Emperor's sister Anna in marriage, on the condition that he and his people become Christians.

In the spring or summer of 988, a Russian army of six thousand men arrived in Constantinople. In the battle of Chrysopolis and that of Abydus on April 13, 989, this force tipped the scales in favor of Basil and saved his throne. These Russian mercenaries remained in the service of Byzantium, and Vladimir and the Kievan population were promptly baptized. But after the victory at Abydus, the Emperor did not hurry to fulfill his obligations to Vladimir. There was a convenient tradition against the offspring of the imperial family marrying barbarians, and the Porphyrogenite bride was unwilling to go to Kiev.

Incensed by this Greek duplicity, Vladimir decided to apply military pressure to achieve his objectives. He struck at the Byzantine possessions in the Crimea and took Cherson between April and July of 989.

After the loss of Cherson, faced with a fresh revolt on the part of Bardas Sclerus and harassed by Bulgarian enemy activity, the Emperor Basil decided to sacrifice his sister on the altar of political expediency. Anna went to Cherson, where the wedding took place. The city was then returned to the Emperor as a dowry (i.e., *veno*—the bridegroom's gift to the parents of his bride). Vladimir and his Porphyrogenite wife took with them to Russia a number of ecclesiastics to build up the Russian Church.

I have recounted here the general view which is held by the great majority of historians. However, there are some divergences that should be pointed out.

Some scholars believe that one of the terms of the agreement between the Emperor and Vladimir was the latter's demand that the Church established in Kiev have special status. The Emperor's unreliability would have confirmed Vladimir's conviction that the new Russian Church should be organized as a unit independent of the patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>3</sup> Many suppositions about the primary organization of the Old Russian Church<sup>4</sup> have their origin in just this thesis.

In an effort to reconcile the contradictory data on the time and place of Vladimir's conversion, certain scholars have suggested that his acceptance of Christianity took place in two stages: a preliminary one (catechumenate, *oglašenje*, *prima signatio*) when the Byzantine mission was in Kiev, and a final one, the full sacrament of baptism, in Cherson after his capture of the

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. D. Priselkov, *Očerki po cerkovno-političeskoj istorii Kievskoj Rusi X–XII vv.* (St. Petersburg, 1913), 33 ff.; and, among many others, M. Jankovskij, "Kreščenie Rusi," *Učenyje Zapiski Lenin-gradskogo Gos. Universiteta*, no. 36 (1939), hist. ser. no. 3, pp. 55–56; N. Zernov, "Vladimir and the Origin of the Russian Church," *SIEERev*, 28 (1950), no. 71, pp. 425–32; V. Mošin, in *Byzantinoslavica*, 24 (1963), 94–96; M. Čubatij, *Istorija hristijanstva na Rusi-Ukrajini*, I (Rome-New York, 1965), 238–73.

<sup>4</sup> For well-grounded criticism of these theories, L. Müller, *Zum Problem des hierarchischen Status und der jurisdiktionellen Abhängigkeit der russischen Kirche vor 1039* (Cologne-Braunsfeld, 1959), 9–47; see also A. Poppe, *Państwo i Kościół na Rusi w XI wieku* (Warsaw, 1968) (hereafter, Poppe, *Państwo*), 15–39. Because this question still excites controversy, I will return to the problem in a forthcoming article about the original status of the Old Russian Church.



city.<sup>5</sup> This premature interpretation is dictated by an unwillingness to disregard one of the discrepant pieces of evidence.

Several scholars have emphasized that the capture of Cherson resulted chiefly in the recovery for Rus' of access to the Black Sea.<sup>6</sup> Carried to the extreme, such a hypothesis suggests the main reason for the ravaging of Cherson to have been the reduction of the political and economic significance of that city as a Byzantine mainstay on the Black Sea coast, and, thus, the consolidation of the position of Tmutarakan'—a Russian outpost on the Black Sea.<sup>7</sup>

Some scholars have tried to question the terminus ante quem (July 27) for the capture of Cherson by Vladimir. The problem with their reasoning is their use of the unreliable and contradictory chronology of events given by Old Russian sources, as well as their assumption that the Emperor would not have made peace with Bardas Sclerus in October 989 had he not been involved in a conflict with Vladimir and unable, therefore, to count on Russian support. The strength of their argument lies in the assumption that a conflict between the Emperor and Vladimir over Basil's reluctance to give Anna in marriage could have started only after the battle of Abydos (April 13, 989), from which they have concluded that the siege of Cherson began in July 989, the subsequent fall of the city taking place after October 989, most likely at the beginning of 990.<sup>8</sup> Others, taking into account that Cherson was captured before July 27, 989, propose that Vladimir personally commanded the Russian troops at Abydos on April 13 of that year. They further suggest that, having failed to secure his Porphyrogenite bride, Vladimir attacked Cherson on his way back to Rus'.<sup>9</sup> This hypothesis, however attractive, overlooks the fact that the Russian troops remained in Byzantium.

<sup>5</sup> So proposed by I. I. Mališevskij, in his review of Golubinskij, *Istorija*, I, pts. 1–2 (1880–81), in *Otčet o 24 prisuždenii nagrad grafa Uvarova SPb* (1882) 53, 68; Šmurlo, "Kogda," 140, 144, 148; and more recently, Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 195. There are no grounds for estimating the length of Vladimir's catechumenate, i.e., the gradual revealing of the truths of faith, which always preceded the final rite of baptism and was accompanied by church rites. The catechumenate could last several months, especially with the tendency to baptize at Eastertime (in Vladimir's day, the original term of three years was unknown), or only a few days (eight or forty days for adults in twelfth-century Novgorod), because, according to apostolic tradition, it was possible to baptize an eligible man directly after instruction. Also, the Byzantine *ordo* unites the function of catechumenate and baptism proper, so conversions in two stages were unknown. Cf. A. Staerk, *Der Taufritus in der griechisch-russischen Kirche. Sein apostolischer Ursprung und seine Entwicklung* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1903), 5ff., 22, reviewed by A. Petrovskij, in *VizVrem*, 11 (1904), 180–83, and J. Bois, in *EO*, 8 (1905), 193–200; the articles by P. de Puniet, in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris, 1910), s.v. "Baptême," II,1, cols. 285–94, and "Catéchuménat" (according to the Byzantine rite), II,2, cols. 2619–20; Golubinskij, *Istorija*, I, pt. 2 (rep. 1904), 426.

<sup>6</sup> Uspenskij, *Rus'* (note 1 *supra*), 37; and, among others, B. D. Grekov, "'Povest' vremennyh let' o pohode Vladimira na Korsun'," *Izvestija Tavričeskogo obščestva istorii, arheologii i etnografii*, III (Simferopol, 1929), 99–112, rep. in *idem*, *Izbrannye trudy*, II (Moscow, 1959), 413–28; A. L. Jakobson, *Rannesrednevekovyj Hersones*, Materialy i Issledovanija po Arheologii SSSR, 63 (Moscow, 1959), 63–65.

<sup>7</sup> D. L. Talis, "Iz istorii russko-korsunskih političeskikh otnošenij v IX–X vv.," *VizVrem*, N.S. 14 (1958), 108–15, in which there are many misinterpretations; for instance, the author attributes to Cedrenus and Zonaras the information that the fall of Cherson and the Russian threat aroused in Constantinople the strong fear that the Russian King would join the Bulgarians (*ibid.*, 112–13).

<sup>8</sup> V. Zavitnevič, "O meste i vremeni kreščeniia kievljan," *Trudy Kievskoj Duhovnoj Akademii* (1888), pt. 1, pp. 135–36, 143–44; Šmurlo, "Kogda," 123–24, 143–48.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. N. Baumgarten, *Saint Vladimir et la conversion de la Russie* (Rome, 1932) (= *OC*, no. 79), 76–81. The author of this large but uncritical compilation was inspired in this case by the suggestions of F. Uspenskij (*ŽMNP*, 232 [April, 1884], 305, 311) and Vasil'evskij (*Trudy*, II, 90–92). However,

A number of historians have also accepted as fact the visit of papal envoys to Vladimir in Cherson after its fall.<sup>10</sup> However, they failed to realize that this embassy was the invention of a sixteenth-century Muscovite historian<sup>11</sup> who, by stressing that Vladimir's decision to be baptized according to the Greek rite was a voluntary one, gave historical basis to Moscow's claim as the third Rome.

In trying to find a motive for Vladimir's campaign against Cherson, some researchers have proposed reasons of state: Vladimir wished to enter into the orthodox Christian community—the Byzantine Commonwealth, according to today's fashion—but was too proud to ask Byzantium for the baptism of Rus', and he further wished to negotiate with the Byzantine Emperor as an equal. In demanding admission into the imperial family, Vladimir thus considered the international prestige of his country.<sup>12</sup> Other scholars see Vladimir's untamed sensuality: he acceded so easily to Christianization and conquered Cherson in order to win the princess "born in the purple."<sup>13</sup> And there are some historians who suggest that a Church independent of Byzantium was so important to Vladimir that he captured Cherson in order to have Crimean ecclesiastics to evangelize his country (with the archbishop of Cherson as a kind of supervisor for the young Russian Church).<sup>14</sup>

From this short review, it is easy to see that the "Cherson problem" remains the key question in the interpretation of Byzantino-Russian relations around the time of the conversion of Rus' to Christianity.

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since we clearly have here a Latin mistranslation of Scylitzes and a misinterpretation of Yahyā's text by Ibn-al-Athīr, there are no grounds for this hypothesis; cf. Levčenko, *Očerki*, 358–59.

<sup>10</sup> Among others, Baumgarten, *Saint Vladimir*, 87; G. Vernadsky, *A History of Russia*. II, *Kievan Russia* (New Haven, 1948), 65; *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. and trans. S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass., 1953) (hereafter, Cross, *Chronicle*), 245; B. Ja. Ramm, *Papstvo i Rus' v X–XV vekah* (Moscow, 1959), 39–40; Čubatij, *Istorija* (note 3 *supra*), 245–46; Vlasto, *Entry*, 273. F. Dvornik's suggestion (*Byzantine Missions* [note 2 *supra*], 271–72), based on a mistaken reference to the Russian Primary Chronicle, that the embassy could have come from Vladimir's wife's cousin (Empress Theophano, widow of Otto II; cf. *infra*, note 125), lacks source evidence, even if contact between them could have taken place.

<sup>11</sup> *Patriaršaja ili Nikonovskaja letopis'*, in PSRL, IX (St. Petersburg, 1862), col. 57; cf. cols. 64, 65, 68 for other information about Vladimir's relations with the pope in the years 991, 994, 1000/1 (with Babylon as well!). This large historiographical compilation, made during the first half of the sixteenth century and containing many interpolations even within the adopted text of the Primary Chronicle, has been considered by some modern historians as a primary source despite the fact that its author, an official historiographer, prepared his text according to the ideological and political desires of the Muscovite rulers. It is appropriate to mention here the remark of M. N. Tihomirov that the rule of Ivan III can account for the special interest toward Rome and the Roman Church in the older part of Nikon's chronicle; quoted in A. A. Zimin, *Russkie letopisi i hronografy konca XV–XVI vv.* (Moscow, 1960), 20–21; A. G. Kuz'min, "K voprosu o vremeni sozdanija i redakcijah Nikonovskoj letopisi," *ArhEž* 1962 (1963), 114.

<sup>12</sup> First N. Karamzin, *Istorija gosudarstva rossijskago*, I (St. Petersburg, 1816), 212; and later T. Barsov, *Konstantinopol'skij patriarh i ego vlast' nad rusškoju cerkoviju* (St. Petersburg, 1878), 326–35; Golubinskij, *Istorija*, 158–63.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. S. Srkulj, "Drei Fragen aus der Taufe des heiligen Vladimir," *ASP*, 29 (1907), 255–67. This author went so far as to suspect a secret agreement between Basil and Vladimir: the capture of Cherson by the Rus' would help the Emperor justify his giving Anna in marriage to a barbarian (*ibid.*, 269–81).

<sup>14</sup> E.g., V. Zavitnevič, "Vladimir Svjatoj kak političeskij dejatel'," *Trudy Kievskoj Duhovnoj Akademii* (1888), pt. 2, p. 196; cf. G. Vernadsky, "The Status of the Russian Church during the First Half-Century following Vladimir's Conversion," *SLEERev*, 20 (1941), 298–99, 302; Čubatij, *Istorija* (note 3 *supra*), 223–29, 239; F. Dvornik, *The Slavs. Their Early History and Civilization* (Boston, 1956), 210; *idem*, *Byzantine Missions* (note 2 *supra*), 272.

II. Some Remarks about the Sources<sup>15</sup>

Before examining the sources, it might be worthwhile to attempt to answer a question which has vexed scholars time and again: why were both contemporary and later Byzantine writers so strangely silent on such a significant event as the conversion of Rus'? Knowing the mentality of the Byzantines, one might assume that they were so busy with their own affairs and so scornful of the barbarians that the conversion was either not noticed or not recognized as important.

In my view, however, the answer lies elsewhere. In Byzantine official opinion, as reflected in its historiography, the conversion of the Rhôs had been achieved long before—that is, about 867, as was claimed by Photius in an encyclical sent to the Eastern patriarchs. This date was also believed by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus some eighty years later, as attested in the *Life* of Basil I the Macedonian, written about 950.<sup>16</sup> This official point of view was no doubt useful for domestic reasons as well; it would have been embarrassing to have to admit that at Abydos, in Psellus' words, "on that day which was to determine the future of the Empire," the foremost Christian ruler was reduced to seeking help from the pagan Rhôs.

Thus, at the time of the revolt of Bardas Phocas, imperial and ecclesiastical authorities were, it seems, dealing with Rus' as a Christian country, and they saw what was happening there as nothing more than the individual, personal baptism of Vladimir along with other previously unbaptized Russians, and the organization of a Russian ecclesiastical province. In Church circles these events could have been interpreted simply as the overcoming of an apostasy.

This unrealistic attitude on the part of the Byzantines becomes more comprehensible in the light of the attitude of that zealous propagator of Christianity, Bruno of Querfurt. On his journey to the land of the Patzinaks in 1008, this missionary-bishop visited Kiev, where he established close contact with

<sup>15</sup> The idea of "source" has been rather freely interpreted by many historians: later materials (from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries) have been evaluated on the same level as the primary sources. A critical survey of sources on the baptism of Vladimir is given by G. Laehr, *Die Anfänge des russischen Reiches* (Berlin, 1930; rep. Vaduz, 1965), 110–11 (Appendix VI); for an extensive but cursory survey, cf. M. Klimenko, *Ausbreitung des Christentums in Russland seit Vladimir dem Heiligen bis zum 17. Jahrhundert. Versuch einer Übersicht nach russischen Quellen* (Berlin-Hamburg, 1969), 31–60. A voluminous restatement of the sources can be found in F. Schlumberger, *L'Épopée byzantine à la fin du dixième siècle* (Paris, 1896–1905). The corresponding Arabic texts were published recently with a German translation and notes by P. Kawerau, in *Arabische Quellen zur Christianisierung Russlands* (Wiesbaden, 1967). I do not take into account here the Scandinavian survivals in the Icelandic sagas (mainly in the thirteenth-century saga of Olaf Truggwison) about the baptism of Vladimir. Their value has been overestimated (cf. Baumgarten, *Saint Vladimir*, 29–34, 63–68), and is justly criticized by F. Dvornik, *The Making of Central and Eastern Europe* (London, 1949), 170ff. One can accept the theory that the circumstances of the conversion in Kiev were known in Iceland, but only indefinitely. Cf. S. H. Cross, "La tradition islandaise de saint Vladimir," *RES*, 11 (1931), 147.

<sup>16</sup> *Photii epistolae XIII*, 35, in PG, 102, cols. 735–38; Theophanes Continuatus, *De Basilio Macedone*, bk. V, 97, Bonn ed. (1838), 342–43 (the latter attributes this event to Patriarch Ignatius, but this divergence is not important here); cf. Golubinskij, *Istoriia*, 50–52; F. Dvornik, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1926; rep. 1970), 143–46; Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 182–84. See also H. Ahrweiler, "Les relations entre les Byzantins et les Russes au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Bulletin d'Information et de Coopération*, 5 (1971), 44–70.

Vladimir. In his report to the German Emperor Henry II, Bruno of Querfurt evidently considered Russia a deeply Christian country. Furthermore, this future martyr and saint, so eager to spread Christianity among the pagans, accepted the form for the reality. His schoolmate, the chronicler and bishop Thietmar of Merseburg (died 1018), with all his political contacts, was apparently more interested in Vladimir's lechery than anything else. His data on Vladimir's marriage to the Byzantine princess (whom he called "Helen"! ) are inaccurate and misleading. According to Thietmar, Vladimir was converted to Christianity under pressure from his Byzantine wife.<sup>17</sup>

What the Byzantine historians tell us about the events of 987–89 is limited to the following sources: a) Psellus' mention of the arrival of the Russian forces and their participation in the battle with the army of Bardas Phocas;<sup>18</sup> b) the almost identical information of Skylitzes, who also mentions Vladimir's marriage to the Emperor's sister;<sup>19</sup> and c) Leo the Deacon's short digression on the capture of Cherson by the Russes. The first two of these accounts belong to the second half of the eleventh century and could be considered secondhand sources. However, Leo the Deacon relates that fiery pillars (northern lights) appeared in the heavens, presaging the capture of Cherson by the Rus' and of Berrhoea by the Bulgars, and further notes that a comet gave warning of a subsequent earthquake in Constantinople.<sup>20</sup> This contemporary evidence is especially important since these celestial phenomena are accurately dated by the Christian Arab historian Yahyā of Antioch, and also, in part, by the contemporary Armenian historian Stephen of Taron, called Asoghik. Vasil'evskij and Rozen first established, in 1876 and in 1883, by comparison of these data that Cherson was taken between April 7, when the pillar of fire was seen, and July 27, 989, from which date the comet was visible for twenty days.<sup>21</sup>

The Armenian Stephen of Taron (Asoghik) gives more valuable data for Byzantino-Russian relations,<sup>22</sup> although his evidence on Russia's conversion

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Bruno's letter to Henry II, in *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, I (1864), 224–25; Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, ed. K. Holzmann (Berlin, 1935), IV, 73; VII, 72; VIII, 32; for one estimate of both sources, see M. Hellmann, "Vladimir der Heilige in der zeitgenössischen abendländischen Überlieferung," *JbGOst*, 7 (1959), 397–412; cf. Vlasto, *Entry*, 274–75; and *infra*, note 114.

<sup>18</sup> M. Psellus, *Chronographie; ou Histoire d'un siècle de Byzance (976–1077)*, ed. and trans. E. Renauld (Paris, 1926) (hereafter, *Chronographia*), I, §§ 13–15, vol. I, p. 9; *The Chronographia*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London, 1953), 17.

<sup>19</sup> *Ioannis Scylitzae synopsis historiarum*, ed. J. Thurn, CFHB, V (Berlin-New York, 1973) (hereafter, *Scylitzae synopsis*), 336; cf. *Georgius Cedrenus*, Bonn ed., II (1839), 444.

<sup>20</sup> Leo Diaconus, *Historia*, Bonn ed. (1828), 175.

<sup>21</sup> V. G. Vasil'evskij, "K istorii 976–986 godov," in *idem*, *Trudy*, II, 98–106; Rozen, *Imperator*, 214–18; cf. Levčenko, *Očerki*, 360.

<sup>22</sup> The Armenian text was published twice (Paris, 1859, and St. Petersburg, 1885); translations: Russian, by N. Emin (Moscow, 1864); French, by E. Dulaurier and F. Macler (Paris, 1883–1917); German, by H. Gelzer and A. Burckhardt (Leipzig, 1907). A detailed introduction and commentary to the last part of this work is given by F. Macler, *Histoire universelle par Etienne Asolik de Tarôn*, pt. 2, bk. III (888[?]-1004[?]) (Paris, 1917) (= Publications de l'Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes, ser. I, vol. XVIII bis) (hereafter, *Histoire universelle*), pp. clxii, 209; cf. also H. Thorassian, *Histoire de la littérature arménienne des origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, 1951), 124–25; V. Inglisian, "Die armenische Literatur," in *HO*, vol. 1, pt. 7, *Armenisch und kaukasische Sprachen* (Leiden, 1963), 187.

is unintentional. Somewhat before 1005, he tells of the incorporation of the dominions of the late Iberian ruler of Upper Tao (Tayk'), curopalates David, by Basil II in the year 1000. Among other events, he records a battle, which took place by accident at Havcić (near modern Erzurum), between the Byzantine and Georgian armies. The battle started with a fight between a Russian and a Georgian soldier over an armful of hay. When the Russian was killed, Asoghik tells us, "All the Russian folk there rose to battle—there were 6000 footsoldiers whom the Emperor Basil had received from the king of Rus' when he gave his sister in marriage to the latter, and at the time that this nation came to believe in Christ."<sup>23</sup> This is all that Asoghik tells us about the Russian forces, though he describes in detail the revolt of Bardas Phocas and the battles of Chrysopolis and Abydus. For an Armenian historian, not the instrument (the Russian forces) but the architect of victory (the Emperor Basil) was of greater importance. However, while assigning, with a certain amount of satisfaction, the responsibility for the bloodbath suffered by the "supercilious" Georgian princes and nobles, Asoghik felt it necessary to explain why Russian soldiers were taking part in Basil's expedition to "the Eastern countries."

I shall try to connect with Byzantino-Russian relations another account by Asoghik, a narration of the misadventure of an anonymous metropolitan of Sebaste, the capital of the Byzantine province of Armenia II. Asoghik tells us that this metropolitan persecuted Armenian priests in the year 435 (March 25, 986–March 24, 987), and soon afterward, in the same year, was sent by the Emperor to the land of the Bulgars to establish peace. The Bulgars asked the Emperor Basil to give his sister in marriage to their king. The Emperor, with the connivance of this metropolitan, betrayed the Bulgars by sending another woman in place of the promised princess, whereupon the Bulgars burned the metropolitan as a deceiver.<sup>24</sup>

It has been noted that this Armenian historian's treatment of Bulgarian affairs is full of errors.<sup>25</sup> However, although Asoghik records a legend about the well-deserved punishment of a torturer of Armenian priests, not everything in his account is fiction. A Sebastean metropolitan could have been sent on such a mission, but probably not to Bulgaria, as some scholars have been willing to believe.<sup>26</sup> From what is known about Byzantino-Bulgarian relations

<sup>23</sup> Asoghik, III, § 43 (*Histoire universelle*, 161–65; *Des Stephanos von Taron armenische Geschichte*, trans. H. Gelzer and A. Burckhardt [Leipzig, 1907] [hereafter, *Des Stephanos von Taron*], 209–12; *Vseobščaja istorija Stepanosa Taronского, Asoh'ika po prozvaniju*, trans. N. Emin [Moscow, 1864] [hereafter, *Vseobščaja istorija*], 198–201).

<sup>24</sup> Asoghik, III, §§ 20, 22, 24 (*Histoire universelle*, 74–75, 124–28; *Des Stephanos von Taron*, 148–49, 185–87).

<sup>25</sup> Ostrogorsky, *History* (note 2 *supra*), 301; cf. N. Adontz, "Samuel l'Arménien, roi des Bulgares," rep. in *idem, Etudes arméno-byzantines* (Lisbon, 1965), 347ff.

<sup>26</sup> V. N. Zlatarski, *Istorija na pŭrvoto bŭlgarsko carstvo*, pt. 2 (Sofia, 1927), 665–69; G. D. Balasčev, *Bŭlgaritŭ prez' poslednitŭ desetgodišnini na desetija vŭk*, pt. I (Sofia, 1929), 47–49. Adontz, who rejected Asoghik's legendary details, found such Byzantino-Bulgarian dynastic negotiations possible, reasoning that "le russe Vladimir, 'un scythe,' un païen, n'était pas plus digne d'une princesse byzantine qu'un prince bulgare chrétien" ("Samuel," 357 note 28).

ca. 986, it is improbable that such negotiations could have taken place. It is unlikely that the events described in Asoghik's account could have occurred in the period before the Byzantine defeat on August 16/17, 986; in the few months between March 25 and his mission to Bulgaria, the metropolitan of Sebaste would have had not only to persecute Armenian priests and go to Bulgaria, but to exchange polemical letters with the Armenian Katholikos Khatchik as well.<sup>27</sup>

A historical basis for the essence of Asoghik's story can be found in the events of Russo-Byzantine contacts about this time. The large Armenian religious community in Sebaste and neighboring regions was indeed harassed by the Orthodox Church administration, and it was no coincidence that the Armenians of these parts of the Empire supported the usurpers.<sup>28</sup> This anonymous metropolitan of Sebaste must have been forced to leave his seat in 987 when the Armenian provinces of Byzantium fell to Sclerus and then to Phocas.<sup>29</sup> It would have been natural for the metropolitan to take refuge with the Emperor.

Another source gives rise to speculation about the identity and the subsequent vicissitudes of the anonymous metropolitan of Sebaste. The treatise *περί μεταθέσεων* (*De translationibus*), which is known in different versions, attests that during the reign of Basil II (976–1025) Theophylact, metropolitan of Sebaste, was transferred to Russia.<sup>30</sup> In the belief that this information was taken from the history of Theodore of Sebaste, known to have been metropolitan of this city in 997, E. Honigmann concluded that this Theophylact was the predecessor of Theodore and was the first metropolitan of Russia.<sup>31</sup> V. Grumel has, however, questioned Honigmann's assumption that Theodore was the source of this information, pointing out that the year 997 cannot be seen as the *terminus ante quem*; all that can be affirmed is that Theophylact

<sup>27</sup> Asoghik, III, §§ 20–24; usually reliable, this historian sometimes contradicts himself in describing other contemporary events; cf. Adontz, *Études arméno-byzantines*, 304–5.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. P. Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire* (Lisbon, 1963), 20, 32, 37, 42, 46, 47, 52; E. Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches* (Brussels, 1935), 149–56; A. Ter-Mikelian, *Die armenische Kirche in ihren Beziehungen zur byzantinischen* (Leipzig, 1892), 77–80; H. M. Bartikian, "La conquête de l'Arménie par l'Empire byzantin," *REArm*, N.S. 8 (1971), 338–39.

<sup>29</sup> Bardas Sclerus crossed the Byzantine border and occupied Melitene, according to Yaḥyā, in February 987. Sebaste, situated nearby, apparently recognized the usurper without delay; in this territory no resistance was offered. In Sebaste, the Armenian population in the tenth to eleventh centuries was very large and influential. Cf. Charanis, *The Armenians*, 19, 20; D. M. Girard, "Sivas, huit siècles d'histoire," *ROChr*, 10 (1905), 80–95, 169–81, 283–88, 337–49 (the title is misleading—the author is concerned only with the eleventh century).

<sup>30</sup> Vladimir Archimandrite, *Sistematicheskoe opisaniie rukopisei Moskovskoj Sinodal'noj biblioteki*, I. *Rukopisi grečeskie* (Moscow, 1894), 421; Nicephorus Callistus, in his *Church History*, XIV, 39 (PG, 146, col. 1196), reproduced one version of this treatise using, according to G. Gentz, the manuscript known now as *Barrochianus* 142 (fols. 265b–268b containing a list of transfers). Cf. H. O. Coxe, *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae*, I (Oxford, 1853), 114; G. Gentz and F. Winkelman, *Die Kirchengeschichte des Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos und ihre Quellen* (Berlin, 1966), 135–36. This fragment of *Barroc*. 142, with *De translationibus*, was published in 'Ετ. 'Ετ. Βυλ. Σπ., 9 (1932), 179–83, 200, but Theophylact of Russia is not mentioned. The oldest manuscript in which he is mentioned is *Vaticanus* 1455, dated 1299; cf. V. Grumel, "Chronologie patriarcale au X<sup>e</sup> siècle," *REB*, 22 (1964), 53.

<sup>31</sup> E. Honigmann, "Studies in Slavic Church History: IV, Theophylactos, the First Metropolitan of Russia?," *Byzantion*, 17 (1944–45), 148–58.

was sent to Russia before 1025.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Theophylact remains the first metropolitan of Rus' to be reliably mentioned.<sup>33</sup> But in attempting to identify this Theophylact with the anonymous metropolitan of Sebaste mentioned by Asoghik, it is easy to imagine, following Honigmann, that Theophylact of Sebaste, since the beginning of 987 a metropolitan without a see, could have been sent by the Emperor to Kiev to seek aid, and, after concluding the agreement, could have been named the first Russian metropolitan.

The tenor of Yaḥyā of Antioch's story about the conversion of Rus'<sup>34</sup> is similar to that of Asoghik's. The information given in the chronicle of this contemporary historian (*ca.* 980–1066) about the Byzantine civil war, although second hand, has been confirmed many times in its accuracy.<sup>35</sup> Yaḥyā introduced the history of the revolts of Bardas Sclerus and Bardas Phocas into his chronicle after 1015 when he was settled in Antioch, where he made use of local sources (from the Melkite community?). Antioch supported the usurper, Bardas Phocas, who had been its governor in 986–87, and the city followed the progress of his army intently. Also, Antioch had seen these same Russian warriors taking part in the Emperor Basil's Syrian campaign in the 990's.<sup>36</sup> Yaḥyā's chronicle contains the most extensive report on the events which led to Vladimir's baptism, although this historian and his Antiochene source had no interest in it as such. They were more interested in describing how the Emperor Basil met the threat to his power, and how yesterday's enemies could be today's allies. On the basis of Yaḥyā's statement that "Basil sent an embassy to the king of the Rus', although they were his enemies," some scholars might suggest that Vladimir's army supported the Bulgars in the battle of Trajan's Gates (near Sardica, present-day Sofia) on August 17, 986, a great defeat for

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Grumel, "Chronologie," 44–71; but Grumel's other arguments in reconstructing the history of the patriarchate at the end of the tenth century, based on sixteenth-century Russian sources, are untenable. Cf. Poppe, *Państwo*, 31–32.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 29–33; on the imaginary first Russian metropolitans, Leo and Michael, cf. my remarks in *Byzantion*, 35 (1965), 524–27.

<sup>34</sup> Yaḥyā, in Rozen, *Imperator*, 23–24; and in *Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Sa'īd d'Antioche*, ed. and trans. I. Kratchkovsky and A. Vasiliev, fasc. II, PO, 23 (Paris, 1932), p. 423; Kawerau, *Arabische Quellen* (note 15 *supra*), 14–19 (with commentary). According to J. H. Forsyth (see *infra*, note 40), who was kind enough to compare the Russian and French translations of the section on the baptism of the Rus' with the Arabic text of Yaḥyā, the Russian translation by Rozen is more literal throughout and gives a better idea of the actual grammatical constructions; the French translation by Vasiliev is only slightly looser and freer, however, and does quite accurately express what Yaḥyā says.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Rozen, *Imperator*, 057–091, 194 ff.; A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, II (Brussels, 1950), 80–91; G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, II (Rome, 1947), 49–51; M. Canard, "Les sources arabes de l'histoire byzantine aux confins des X<sup>e</sup> et XI<sup>e</sup> siècles," *REB*, 19 (1961), 300–12.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Yaḥyā, in PO, 23, pp. 442–43, 457–60; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 32–33, 40–41 note 272; Asoghik, III, §§ 42, 43. Because of the incidental burning of a church in Homs (Emise), it is known that the Rhôs took part in Basil II's Syrian campaign in autumn 999. The Emperor's detachments were quartered in Antioch and Cilicia, from which in early summer 1000 they marched to annex the dominions of David of Tayk'. Here again, because of a chance battle at Havcić, Russian soldiers are mentioned. Since Basil II appeared in person in Syria in 995, it can be supposed that he brought Russian troops with him to fight against the Fatimids. In any case, at that time it was common not only to hear about Russian soldiers, but to meet them in the streets of Antioch. Their presence reminded the local chronicler of Russian participation in the events of 988/89. Thus, it is possible that Yaḥyā's source in this regard was recorded not immediately, but some years later, perhaps around 999/1000. This could explain the sequence of events, viewed in retrospect, preserved in Yaḥyā's text.

Basil. There are no grounds for this speculation in the sources; it was inspired by a note in the Russian Primary Chronicle for 985 that "Vladimir conquered the Bulgars" and "made peace with them." This raid, however, was directed against the Bulgars on the Volga, and did not extend into Balkan Bulgaria.<sup>37</sup> The description of the Rus' as enemies of Byzantium seems to be connected with a prior account by Yaḥyā of the Balkan war with Svjatoslav<sup>38</sup> and was added here simply to emphasize the desperate situation of Basil II.

Yaḥyā's account of the conversion of Rus' reads as follows: the two sides negotiated a treaty of relationship by marriage. Vladimir married the sister of the Emperor after the latter had demanded his baptism, along with all the people of his land. And when the business of the marriage had been concluded, the Rus' forces arrived and started to fight against Phocas . . . .<sup>39</sup>

There is no need to repeat the entire account of Yaḥyā, especially since its three translations are easily accessible. However, it should be noted that this text, which is full of dates, stresses not a chronological but a causally consecutive sequence, although the chronological data Yaḥyā gives are of great importance for the reconstruction of the course of events.

As the rest of the Arabic sources on the baptism of Rus' are mainly derivative in nature, we can ignore them, with the exception of the account of Abū Shujā', vizier of the Abbasid caliph and the continuator of the chronicle of Ibn-Miskawaih, "The Experiences of the Nation." This account has not hitherto been properly evaluated as a source for the study of Byzantino-Russian relations. Abū Shujā' recorded sometime between 1072 and 1092 the events of the years 979–99. His work appears to be mainly an abridgement of the missing chronicle of Hilāl B. Muḥassin b. Ibrāhīm al-Sābī (970–1056), a contemporary of Yaḥyā.<sup>40</sup> "Reduced to a state of weakness," says Abū Shujā', "the two emperors sent for aid to the king of the Russians; he demanded their sister's hand in marriage, but she refused to surrender herself to a bridegroom of a different religion; correspondence ensued which resulted in the Russian king adopting Christianity. The alliance was then contracted and the princess was given to him. He sent a number of his followers to assist them [the emperors], men of strength and courage. When this reinforcement reached

<sup>37</sup> PSRL, I, col. 84; cf. Cross's commentary to *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 96, 294; B. D. Grekov, "Volžskie bolgary v IX–X vv.," *Istoričeskie Zapiski*, 14 (1945), 13–14; Levčenko, *Očerki*, 336.

<sup>38</sup> Yaḥyā, in PO, 18 (1924), 833; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 180–81.

<sup>39</sup> Yaḥyā, in PO, 23, pp. 422–24; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 23–24; Kawerau, *Arabische Quellen*, 15–18.

<sup>40</sup> The summarization of Abū Shujā' can be seen in his chronology, where several years are collected under one. Cf. H. F. Amedroz, "The Tajārib al-Umam of Abū 'Alī Miskawaih," *Der Islam*, 5 (1914), 340–41. The author concludes that both Abū Shujā' and Ibn al-Qalānisi based their works on Hilāl's history, but C. Cahen assumed that the question of Ibn al-Qalānisi's sources are more complex than Amedroz supposed. Cf. C. Cahen, "Note d'historiographie syrienne. La première partie de l'histoire d'Ibn al-Qalānisi," *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), 156–65. The analysis of J. H. Forsyth (in the forthcoming publication of his dissertation on Yaḥyā) leaves no doubt that Ibn al-Qalānisi has used Hilāl al-Sābī, among others, for the years 986–89. But there is no trace of a reference to Rus'. The supposition of Vasiliev (*Byzance et les Arabes*, II [note 35 *supra*], pt. 2, p. 89) and Canard ("Les sources" [note 35 *supra*], 297) that Yaḥyā, as well as Abū Shujā', could have used the chronicle of Hilāl is unsound.



Constantinople, they crossed the strait in ships to meet Wardis [Phocas] . . . . No sooner however had they reached the shore and got on the same terrain with the enemy, than a battle commenced, wherein the Russians proved themselves superior, and put Wardis to death."<sup>41</sup>

The scheme of this account is basically the same as that of Yaḥyā, except for some differences in details, a far stronger emphasis by Abū Shūjā' on the great weight carried by the Russian troops, and the fact that Yaḥyā speaks exclusively about the Emperor Basil while Abū Shūjā' takes into account the legal situation (Basil and Constantine were coemperors). The source of Abū Shūjā' remains a mystery.

We must now consider to what extent the surviving Old Russian material meets our purposes. Two such works have recorded the circumstances of Russia's conversion: 1) the Russian Primary Chronicle, a compilation from the second decade of the twelfth century, formerly called the "Chronicle of Nestor" but now frequently referred to by the first sentence of the text, "The Tale of Bygone Years";<sup>42</sup> and 2) the *Life* of St. Vladimir, a hagiographical work known in several versions and redactions, of which the oldest is the so-called "Memory and Eulogy of Vladimir."<sup>43</sup>

Briefly, the Primary Chronicle relates the story of the conversion as follows. In 986, missionaries from foreign lands and of different religions came to Kiev hoping to win over the Russian ruler. Vladimir, after questioning them, rejected each in turn. The last to be examined was the Greek philosopher, who seems to have completely convinced Vladimir that "the Greek faith" was the true one. Nevertheless, Vladimir decided to "wait yet a little." In 987 he sent his own emissaries abroad to find out still more about the religions. On their return to Kiev, the envoys advised Vladimir to accept Greek Christianity, to which Vladimir agreed and inquired where the baptism should take place. A year later, the Chronicle continues, in 988, Vladimir and his warriors attacked Cherson, and the beleaguered Greek city was forced to surrender. Then Vladimir demanded the sister of Basil and Constantine in marriage and warned that, if this was refused, he would deal with Constantinople as he had dealt with Cherson. The troubled Emperors replied that if Vladimir were baptized he would be permitted to marry Anna. Vladimir told them that he had already studied their religion and that he was willing to be baptized. The Emperors sent to Cherson, against her will, their lamenting sister, accom-

<sup>41</sup> *The Eclipse of the 'Abassid Caliphate. VI, Continuation of The Experiences of the Nations by Abu Shuja' Rudhravari* . . . , trans. D. S. Margoliouth (Oxford, 1921), 118-19; Arabic text: *The Eclipse* . . . , III, 116-17; cf. Kawerau, *Arabische Quellen*, 20-22; Russian translation by T. Kezma, with Ukrainian introduction by A. Kryms'kyj, "Opovidannja arabs'kogo istoryka XI viku Abu-Šodži Rudravers'kogo pro te jak oxrestilasja Rus'," in *Jubilejnyj zbirnik na pošanu D. I. Bagalēja* (Kiev, 1927), 383-87, trans. 388-95; offprint, pp. 3-7, trans. 8-15.

<sup>42</sup> PSRL, I, cols. 1-286; II, cols. 1-285; for an English translation with a lengthy introduction, see Cross, *Chronicle*.

<sup>43</sup> Published text in Golubinskij, *Istorija*, 238-46, and A. A. Zimin, "Pamjat' i pohvala Iakova Mniha i Žitie knjazja Vladimira po drevnejšomu spisku," *KrSoobInstSlav*, 37 (1963), 66-72 (MSS of the fifteenth century).

panied by dignitaries and priests. By divine agency, Vladimir began to go blind from the moment of Anna's arrival, but upon her advice he was baptized and miraculously cured. Then Vladimir was taught a lengthy creed which urged him to avoid the deceit of heretics. The narrative ends with Vladimir returning Cherson to the Greeks and taking Anna and priests of Cherson to Kiev, where the mass baptism of the inhabitants then took place.<sup>44</sup>

Although it has long been realized that the Chronicle incorporates literary elements,<sup>45</sup> this story is still considered "the principle source of our knowledge of the events of Russia's conversion."<sup>46</sup> However, this treatment of the Chronicle as an original source in which later interpolations of marvels were inserted is not acceptable. No account of the conversion was made in Vladimir's time. This story presents a clear historiographical conception of the conversion of the Rus' according to the spirit of the age in which it was written, and one consistent with Russian reality over a hundred years after Christianization.

Some modern scholars are irritated by the chronicler's inability to provide any plausible reason for Vladimir's attack on Cherson.<sup>47</sup> The Crimean campaign is related without any logical sequence, and in direct contradiction, to the theological victory of the Greek philosopher. But this story has its own logic, that of Providence. The author attempted to present the Christianization of his country not as a political event but as a significant religious one. He accumulated dramatic occurrences culminating in the loss of Vladimir's eyesight, so that, after the miraculous cure by baptism, the Rus' king would say, "I have now perceived the one true God." Thus, the Chronicle's story of the conversion is a remarkable primary source for the Old Russian historical consciousness, and for literary and religious life and customs at the beginning of the twelfth century.

Yet, despite the insertion of legendary material, some reliable fragments of evidence, such as the capture of Cherson, are preserved. To the chronicler, the age of the conversion was shrouded in the mists of time, and various versions were in circulation. The author of the Chronicle, claiming that Vladimir was baptized in Cherson, remarked, "Those who do not know the truth say he was baptized in Kiev, while others assert this event took place in Vasil'ev, while still others mention other places."<sup>48</sup>

Scholars have noted that this Chronicle's story represents a compilation of two different versions of the conversion. The question of literary sources has been examined as well, though in many respects not thoroughly enough, and

<sup>44</sup> PSRL, I, cols. 84–121; II, cols. 71–105; Cross, *Chronicle*, 96–119.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. especially M. Suhomlinov, *O drevnej russkoj l'etopisi kak' pamjatnik' literaturnom'* (St. Petersburg, 1856); K. Bestuzhev-Rjumin, *O sostave russkikh letopisej do konca XIV veka* (St. Petersburg, 1868), 31–69; and A. A. Šahmatov, *Razyskanija o drevnejšykh russkikh letopisnykh svodakh* (St. Petersburg, 1908), 133–61.

<sup>46</sup> This commonly accepted view was clearly expressed recently by Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 193.

<sup>47</sup> Cf., for instance, Zernov, "Vladimir" (note 3 *supra*), 129–30; while scholars usually describe the *Weltanschauung* of medieval chroniclers as having been providential, they often seem surprised when the chroniclers act in accordance with this interpretation.

<sup>48</sup> Cross, *Chronicle*, 113.

needs further clarification.<sup>49</sup> The first version, the "Examination of the Religions" ending with the exposition of the Eastern Orthodox doctrine, was borrowed from Old Church Slavonic writings. A polemic against the Latins, including among other things the controversy about the *azymos* (unleavened bread), allows us to date this narrative not earlier than the second half of the eleventh century, closer to the time of the chronicler who perhaps gathered and compiled the material himself.<sup>50</sup> The second version, the story of Vladimir's conversion at Cherson (the so-called Cherson legend), was recorded either at the Cave Monastery in Kiev or at its branch on the Black Sea near Tmutarakan' (τό Ταμάταρχα) in the seventies or eighties of the eleventh century.<sup>51</sup> All other expanded versions of the Cherson legend must, contrary to some opinion, derive from this version in the Primary Chronicle.<sup>52</sup> The local color in the legend, which has been dealt with at length by researchers,<sup>53</sup> gives excellent information

<sup>49</sup> For the sources, cf. N. K. Nikol'skij, *Materialy dlja povremennogo spiska russkikh pisatelej i ih sočinenij* (X–XI vv.) (St. Petersburg, 1906), 6–43; A. A. Šahmatov, "'Povest' vremennyh let' i ee istočniki," *TrDrLit*, 4 (1940), 124ff.; Bahrušyn, "K voprosu" (note 2 *supra*), 48–50; R. V. Ždanov, "Kreščenie Rusi i Načal'naja letopis'," *Istoričeskie Zapiski*, 5 (1939), 3–30; D. S. Lihačev, *Russkie letopisi i ih kulturno-istoričeskoe značenie* (Moscow, 1947), 72–75; Cross, *Chronicle*, notes pp. 244–49; A. S. L'vov, "Issledovanie Reči filosafo," in *Pamjatniki drevnerusskoj pis'mennosti* (Moscow, 1968), 333–96; for the inspiration of Greek literature in the account of the Russian embassies abroad, cf. R. A. Klostermann, "Eine Stelle der russischen Nestorchronik," *OCP*, 39 (1973), fasc. 2, pp. 469–80. The question of the sources is extensively examined by V. Nikolaev, *Slavjanobŭlgarskijat faktor v hristijanizacijata na Kievskaja Rusija* (Sofia, 1949), 4–51, whose conclusions are very often uncritical and misleading.

<sup>50</sup> For the beginning of the controversy about the *azymos*, cf. A. Poppe, in *Byzantion*, 35 (1965), 504–27. The chronology of the different parts of the Chronicle's story of the conversion still gives rise to conflicting opinions. Thus, for instance, L'vov ("Issledovanie," 395–96) claims that the "speech" of the Greek philosopher, East Bulgarian in origin, was adopted by Old Russian writers in the first half of the eleventh century. His only argument is that the measured tone of the "speech" is far removed from the impetuous tone of the anti-Latin tract which he attributes, after I. P. Eremin (*TrDrLit*, 5 [1947], 158–63), to Theodosius, abbot of the Cave Monastery in Kiev, and dates to 1069 (cf. recently also Vlasto, *Entry*, 288). On the other hand, the convincing arguments for its authorship by Theodosius the Greek, abbot of the same monastery in the middle of the twelfth century, were unknown to these scholars; cf. K. Viskovatij, in *Slavia*, 16 (1938), 535–67; N. K. Gudzij, "O sočinenijah Feodosija Pečerskogo," *Problemy obščestvenno-političeskoj istorii Rossii i slavjanskijh stran* (Moscow, 1963), 62–66; Pašuto, *Vnešnjaja politika* (note 2 *supra*), 311.

<sup>51</sup> Nikol'skij, *Materialy*, 36–40; *idem*, "Slovo o tom, kako krestisia Vladimir voz'ma Korsun," *Sbornik Otdela russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoj Akademij Nauk*, 82 (1907), no. 4, pp. 1–24; for the most important contribution on this problem, cf. A. A. Šahmatov ("Korsunskaja legenda o kreščenii Vladimira," *Sbornik statej posvjaščennyh . . . V. I. Lamanskomu . . .*, pt. 2 [St. Petersburg, 1908], 1029–1153; *idem*, *Razyskanija* [note 45 *supra*], 133–44), who demonstrated the legendary nature of the story about Vladimir's baptism in Cherson; Šmurlo, "Kogda," 127–31, challenges Šahmatov's thesis and concludes that the "Cherson legend is not myth invested in historical garments but quite the opposite: historical fact adorned in fabulous attire." Cf. also Lihačev, *Russkie letopisi*, 87–88.

<sup>52</sup> Šahmatov and many later authors considered that the Primary Chronicle has not preserved the original form of the Cherson legend, which he claims was a combination of Greek Chersonian legend about Vladimir's conversion and the Old Russian tradition of the expedition against Cherson. Šahmatov has reconstructed this nonexistent form of the work ("Korsunskaja legenda," 1138–48) by making use of later chronicles and especially of different versions of the *Life* of St. Vladimir. The weakness of this attempt has been exposed by the numerous corrections of R. Ždanov ("Kreščenie Rusi" [note 49 *supra*], 15–25), who attempted to give the restored legend a more convincing form. However, in light of a close examination by Serebrjanskij of the *Lives* of St. Vladimir, Šahmatov's version of the original form of the Kherson legend is indefensible; cf. N. I. Serebrjanskij, *Drevnerusskie knjažeskie žitija* (Čtenija v obščestve istorii i drevnostej rossijskijh pri Moskovskom Universitete, bk. 3) (Moscow, 1915), 43–81; A. Poppe, "Legenda Korsun'ska," *Słownik Starożytności Słowiańskich*, 3 (Wrocław, 1967), 34–35.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. especially S. Šestakov, *Očerki po istorii Hersonesy v VI–X vekah*, *Pamjatniki hristianskogo Hersonesa*, III (Moscow, 1908), 83–93, 125–38; Ždanov, "Kreščenie Rusi," 25.

about the tenth- and eleventh-century topography of Cherson. Some words and expressions seem to reflect a Greek text, although the combination of legendary and historical information created some problems, such as the lack of a reason for the expedition and the question of the actual role of Cherson in the conversion of Rus'.

In the literature on the subject, many theories appear concerning the possibility of reconstructing a text of the *Life* of St. Vladimir which would precede the data preserved in the Primary Chronicle. An analysis of the versions of the life of St. Vladimir, all but one written and rewritten in the fourteenth to sixteenth century, does not permit us to share these optimistic theories. The exception, the "Memory and Eulogy of Vladimir," a triptych composed of the Eulogy itself, the *Life* of St. Olga, Vladimir's grandmother, and the *Life* of Vladimir, is attributed in toto to the monk James and dated to the second half of the eleventh century.<sup>54</sup> The date of its compilation should, however, be connected with the canonization of the baptizer of Rus' which occurred much later, in the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>55</sup> While none of the elements of this trinomial work can be accurately dated to the eleventh century, the third part of the triptych (the oldest version of the *Life* of Vladimir) may have used an earlier source, with a chronology which conflicts with that in the Primary Chronicle. This source could have been isolated annalistic records inserted into the "Memory and Eulogy" during its compilation.<sup>56</sup> According to these records, Vladimir lived twenty-eight years after his baptism and took Cherson in the third year after his conversion. Since Vladimir died on July 15, 1015, the conversion of Rus' would have occurred in the year 987, and the capture of Cherson in the year 989, whereas the Primary Chronicle dates both events to the year 988. "The *Life* of SS. Boris and Gleb," written in 1072, suggests also the year 987 as the year of conversion, saying that Vladimir died twenty-eight years after his baptism.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the possibility of a common source for both *Lives* is not excluded. If, at the turn of the eleventh century, there was some difference of opinion about the place of Vladimir's baptism,<sup>58</sup> different dates for this event could also have been recorded.

This historical inheritance is not very useful for our investigation, since the material on primary sources is weak, and any additional primary evidence must be disengaged from legend and myth. We must now consider the circumstances in which this tradition was formed.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Nikol'skij, *Materialy* (note 49 *supra*), 228–53; Šahmatov, *Razyskanija*, 13–28; Serebrjanskij, *Drevnerusskie knjažeskie žitija*, 43–51.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. S. A. Bugoslavskij, "K literaturnoj istorii 'Pamjati i pohvaly' knjazju Vladimiru," *Izvestija Otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Akademii Nauk*, 24 (1924–25), 105–41; A. Poppe, in *Słownik Starożytności Słowiańskich*, 4 (Wrocław, 1970), 16–18.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. A. N. Nasonov, *Istorija russkogo letopisanija XI–načala XVIII veka* (Moscow, 1969), 27–31.

<sup>57</sup> D. I. Abramovič, *Žitija svjatyh mučenikov Borisa i Gleba i služby im* (Petrograd, 1916), 28.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Cross, *Chronicle*, 113.

## III. Evidence for a Reinterpretation

Neither Leo the Deacon nor the author of the Cherson legend included in his account the reason for Vladimir's expedition to Cherson, although the latter suspected a special Providence at work. What, then, was the temporal reason for the invasion of Cherson?

Contrary to all the literature on this subject, it can be argued that Vladimir's campaign against Cherson was not directed against the Byzantine Empire, but was intended rather to support his brother-in-law, the legitimate Byzantine emperor, by suppressing an internal revolt. The starting point for this thesis is the chronology of events. The auxiliary Russian troops sent to Constantinople sometime in 988 helped the Emperor Basil to overcome the rebel Bardas Phocas on Saturday, April 13, 989. They continued to serve Basil in 989 and 990 by suppressing the prolonged revolt in Asia Minor, especially that of the Iberians; in the Bulgarian campaign at the beginning of 991; and, from 995, on the eastern borders.<sup>59</sup>

According to Leo the Deacon, "the columns of fire that appeared deep in the night to the north . . . pointed to the capture of Cherson by the Tauroscythians, which had occurred, and to the occupation of Berrhoia by the Mysians." The "sky like a pillar of fire" was seen in Cairo on April 7, and the sun continued to change its color until April 12, 989.<sup>60</sup> A comet, which was visible at intervals for a certain period of time, appeared and aroused a foreboding which was confirmed, says Leo, by a devastating earthquake on the eve of St. Demetrius' day. In assessing the damage, he noted that the great dome of Haghia Sophia had collapsed. There is good dated evidence for Leo's testimony, for, according to Yahyā, the comet was visible in Cairo for twenty days from July 27, i.e., to August 15. The latter date is given for the presence of the comet by Asoghik, who directly connects it with an earthquake which followed soon after in "the land of the Greeks" and in Constantinople itself. The earthquake is confirmed and dated by Yahyā to the fourteenth year of Basil's reign, А.Н. 379 (April 11, 989–March 30, 990), and is recorded in the Synaxarium of the Church of Constantinople on October 26: "In the days of

<sup>59</sup> The exact date of the battle of Abydos is given only by Yahyā. Scylitzes indicates the date, April, second indiction, 6497 (989). There is no indication that the Russian crack troops were used against the Bulgarians before Basil II's four-year campaign, which began in March 991. They might have been used before that in action in Asia Minor, where from the time of the agreement with Sclerus (October) until November 11, 989, Leo, the son of Bardas Phocas, held out in Antioch; and again against the Iberians led by Bardas Phocas' follower, Prince Čordvanel, who in 990 were still particularly stubborn. Cf. Asoghik, III, § 27 (*Histoire universelle*, 133–34; *Des Stephanos von Taron* [note 23 *supra*], 190–91); Yahyā, in PO, 23, pp. 427, 431; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 27. Traces of the Russian-Georgian struggle in 989–90 might be seen in the events of the year 1000 described *supra*, pp. 8–9: the bloodbath at Havčič broke out as the result of a quarrel over hay between two soldiers, a Russian and a Georgian, but the explosion which followed indicates that this animosity had already been established.

<sup>60</sup> Leo Diaconus, 175; Yahyā, in PO, 23, pp. 432–33; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 28–29. Unfortunately, the date of the fall of Berrhoia is unknown, although we do know that it was recaptured at the beginning of the campaign against the Bulgarians in the spring of 991, and afterward changed hands several times. Cf. Asoghik, III, § 33 (*Histoire universelle*, 146; *Des Stephanos von Taron*, 198); Yahyā, in PO, 23, pp. 430–31; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 27–28. Cf. Adontz, *Etudes* (note 25 *supra*), 360–66; G. C. Chionides, 'Ιστορία τῆς Βερροίας, II (Berrhoia, 1970), 21–22.

Basil and Constantine, in the year 6498 [989], because of many sins, there was an earthquake on this day, in the third hour of the night, when the dome of the great church of God fell and many other buildings and walls fell also." Here the earthquake is connected with the night of October 25 and the morning of October 26, St. Demetrius' day, when there were probably still earth tremors, but Leo's testimony that it started on the eve of St. Demetrius is accurate, considering the date of the earthquake in Italy on October 25, noted in *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, *Chronicon Romualdi Saleternitani*, *Annales Beneventani*.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, according to the chronology of celestial phenomena given by Leo the Deacon in connection with contemporary events, it can be concluded not only that the capture of Cherson took place after April 7 but also that the terminus ante quem, despite the doubts of some scholars, is July 27, 989. In view of the data, it is difficult to accept a situation in which Vladimir's soldiers were fighting for Basil at the same time that Vladimir was organizing an expedition against this Emperor and besieging Cherson to secure his right to the hand of the Emperor's sister. Therefore, one might conclude that the Russian ruler acted not against a city loyal to the Emperor Basil but against a rebellious one. The Crimean possessions, like some other Byzantine territories on the Black Sea, had declared themselves for the usurpers, and Vladimir, acting as the ally of Basil, attempted to establish order there for his brother-in-law. The arguments for and against this theory must be considered.

One remark of Leo the Deacon would seem to work against this thesis. After stating that the victory at Abydos had brought a halt to the chaos of the civil wars, he describes as "the next calamity" the capture (ἡ ἄλωσις) of Cherson by the Rhôs and the occupation (ἡ κατάσχεσις) of Berrhoia by the Bulgars. These words, "capture" and "occupation," were perhaps used by Leo only as a stylistic device, although one must admit that both accurately reflect the situation: in the first case, military action, and in the second, possession of the city. There is no ambiguity about military operations by the Bulgars against the Empire, and Leo sees the Russian action in the Crimea in the same way, as a severely disturbing defeat for his homeland. Rather than reject his view, one should try to understand it.

Leo the Deacon was not an official historiographer, nor was he an apologist for Basil II. While he had the good of the Empire very much at heart, he did not accept Basil's every action. He blamed the Emperor, for instance, for the defeat by the Bulgarians. Leo's deliberate omission of the marriage of the

<sup>61</sup> Leo Diaconus, *loc. cit.*; Yahyâ, in PO, 23, pp. 428–29, 432–33; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 26–27, 28–29; Asoghik, III, § 27 (*Histoire universelle*, 132; *Des Stephanos von Taron*, 190); *Synaxarium CP*, 166; MGH, SS, VII (Hannover, 1846), 636; Muratori, *RerItalSS* [N.S.], VII, pt. 1 (1914), 170 (here *calculus pisanus*, 990 = 989). Cf. Vasil'evskij, *Trudy*, II, 98–104; S. Der Nersessian, "Remarks on the Date of the Menologium and the Psalter Written for Basil II," *Byzantion*, 15 (1941), 104–6, 110–11. Skylitzes' misleading date (986) for the earthquake (cf. Cedrenus, II, 438; *Scylitzae synopsis*, 331–32) has thrown many historians into confusion. Others have uncritically repeated this date without investigating other sources, among them J. Dück, "Die Erdbeben von Konstantinopel," *Die Erdbebenwarte*, III, 10–12 (Laibach, 1904), 132; V. Grumel, *La chronologie* (Paris, 1958), 480.

Porphyrogenite Anna and the participation of the Rhôs at Chrysopolis and Abydos can be explained by his disapproval of the means by which Basil was trying to save his throne. On the other hand, Leo the Deacon's *History* is full of praise for the Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas (963–69): at the end of his history in the reign of Basil, he paints a gloomy picture of the situation, contrasting it with the prosperity of the Empire under Nicephorus Phocas and John Tzimiskes (969–76).<sup>62</sup> The Byzantino-Russian war in Bulgaria occupies considerable space in his exposition. Giving many details of excesses in the campaign of 969–71, he portrays the Rus' as a sinister and dangerous enemy. As an example, he recalls that the Russes' king Svjatoslav, when asked to join in military action against the Bulgars in 968, turned against the Byzantines and demanded nothing less than their departure from Europe. Therefore, an appeal to the former enemy for help at the time of the civil war, an internal Byzantine affair, was shocking to Leo. He was especially outraged that Cherson, a Crimean province that was, in his opinion, a Greek city and a part of the Byzantine state, should fall prey to the barbarians whose atrocities were etched in his memory. The capture of Cherson contributed to Leo's pessimistic vision of the future of the Empire.

Leo was not alone in these views. John Geometres (Kyriotes), in his poetry written in the 970's and 980's, contrasts an idealized portrait of Nicephorus Phocas with the noble edifice of an Empire torn apart from both within and without. Anxiety about the destiny of his homeland is evident in the political, patriotic verses John Geometres wrote about events which occurred between 989–90.<sup>63</sup> His dismal mood is deepened by the spectacle of fratricidal war ("O bitter sight, a brother raising an axe to his brother's breast"), at a time when "noble cities are disgracefully trod under the feet of strangers." He frequently complains about the neglect of education, science, and the arts in his time; it is known from Psellus that Basil despised literary and learned men, so it is not surprising that the latter showed no sympathy or confidence in him as a ruler. Beside the restrained critical allusions to Basil II in the poetry of John Geometres, it seems possible that the "fearful Emperor and tyrant" in his paraphrase of a church song refers to Basil. The poet's continued gloomy outlook on the times is fully reflected in *Εἰς τὴν ἀπόστασιν* and *Εἰς τὴν ἀποδημίαν*, both written after the earthquake of October 25, 989, hence after Basil's April victory at Abydos and his agreement of October 11 with Sclerus. He pays no

<sup>62</sup> Cf. G. Wartenberg, "Das Geschichtswerk des Leon Diakon," *BZ*, 6 (1897), 108, 111; A. P. Každan, "Iz istorii vizantijskoj hronografii X v.," *VizVrem*, N.S. 20 (1961), 123–28; N. M. Panagiotakes, *Λέων ὁ Διάκονος* (Athens, 1965) (rep. from *Ἑπ.Ἑτ.Βυζ.Σπ.*, 34 [1965], 1–138), 9–15; M. Ja. Sjužumov, "Mirovozzrenie L'va D'jakona," *Antičnaja Drevnost' i Srednie Veka*, 7 (= *Učenie zapiski Uralskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, no. 112, hist. ser. 22) (Sverdlovsk, 1971), 136–38, 141. The latter, like Panagiotakes, identifying Leo the Deacon with Leo (metropolitan) of Karias, author of a flattering encomium addressed to Basil II, emphasizes that "judging from his *History*, Leo can on no account be recognized as a loyal follower of the Macedonian dynasty" (*ibid.*, 136). Most of the last book of Leo the Deacon's *History* consists of an enumeration of the internal and external misfortunes of the Empire during the reign of Basil II. He supports his opinion that the Rhôs are a danger to their neighbors by quoting the prophet Ezek. 38:3, 39:1; cf. Leo Diaconus, 149.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Vasil'evskij, *Trudy*, II, 107–24; F. Scheidweiler, "Studien zu Johannes Geometres," *BZ*, 45 (1952), 300–19.

heed to Basil's successes, seeing only the country's calamities, plunder, drought, and earthquake, and declaring that "the East is bleeding with its own blood and the Sword is dividing kinfolk," and that the homeland is "lifeless and cast down."<sup>64</sup>

The question arises as to what the poet thought about those who were called upon to save the throne and the Empire. Perhaps the answer is evident in the verse Εἰς τοὺς Βουλγάρους:

Κατὰ Σκυθῶν πρὶν συμμάχους, νῦν δὲ Σκύθας  
 λήψοισθε, Θρᾷκες, συμμάχους πρὸς τοὺς φίλους.  
 σκιρτᾶτε καὶ κροτεῖτε, φῦλα Βουλγάρων,  
 καὶ σκῆπτρα καὶ τὸ στέμμα καὶ τὴν πορφύραν  
 κρατεῖτε καὶ φορεῖτε, καὶ φοινικίδας  
 (ζήτησον στίχον ἕνα)  
 μεταμφιάσει καὶ ξύλοις τοὺς αὐχένους  
 μακροῖς συνέξει καὶ κυψῶσι τοὺς πόδας,  
 ξανεῖ δὲ πολλοῖς νῶτα καὶ τὴν κοιλίαν.  
 ἄνθ' ὧν ἀφέντες δημιουργεῖν <σχίσματα>  
 αὐτοὺς φορεῖν τολμᾶτε καὶ φρονεῖν μέγα.

#### About the Bulgarians

Before, Thracians, you wished to win allies against the Scythians,  
 but now you wish to win the Scythians as allies against your  
 friends.

Dance for joy and clap your hands, Bulgarian tribes,  
 take and hold scepters and the stemma and the purple, the  
 scarlet . . .

(one line missing)

. . . he will strip off your clothes and will hold your necks  
 and feet in long planks and pillories,  
 and for many of you will crush your backs and mangle your  
 stomachs.

And so, cease to make <divisions> among yourselves,  
 and have the courage to bear yourselves as men and to be proud.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Cf. J. A. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca*, IV (Oxford, 1841), 271–73, 322–35, 341ff., 347, 361; Vasil'evskij, *Trudy*, II, 112–13, 121–23. Scheidweiler found it impossible to date both poems (about revolt and travel) after the October 25 earthquake, because the poet was traveling to Selybria ἐν μηνὶ Δύστρῳ, i.e., in March, and the revolt of Sclerus ended on October 11 ("Studien," 316–18). But the date on which he started this journey is not that on which he wrote his verse, since he described a summer drought and an earthquake, and no earthquake other than that of October 25 is known. The agreement with Sclerus did not end the revolt, so the poet could still write about the latter after October 25.

<sup>65</sup> The Greek text is according to Scheidweiler ("Studien," 315) after the text of Cramer (*Anecdota Graeca*, IV, 282–83), with English translation by Michael Jeffreys. Here some suppositions of Scheidweiler have been taken into account: αὐτοὺς in the last line instead of τούτους; and σχίσματα for the missing word in the penultimate line, which is out of character with the metrics but renders well the sense. I am aware of the difficulties in understanding this verse, but the revision was stimulated by existing translations and interpretations of the verse as a threat addressed to the Bulgars, rendered insolent by their success of 986, after the conclusion of the alliance between the Byzantines and the Rus'. Russian translation, cf. Vasil'evskij, *Trudy*, II, 117; Bulgarian translation by G. Cankova-



The Thracians are, of course, the Byzantines, used here perhaps ironically for Romans to underline a situation in which the entire territory of the Empire was reduced to the capital and the theme of Thrace. Since the Bulgarians are called here by their own name, "Scythians," normally used for Bulgarians, can only mean Russes, and the poet therefore intends to put them on the same level. Geometres, in speaking of "allies against the Scythians," is referring to the war of 969–71, when Thrace was menaced by Svjatoslav and the Armenians (the "allies") were fighting the Russes. Φίλοι, "friends," in this case would be accurately understood to mean "kith and kin" (φίλοι in this meaning is known), which corresponds exactly to the insurgent peoples, namely the Greeks, Armenians, and Iberians. A situation in which Russes are called upon to fight against the kith and kin of the Thracians would please only the Bulgarians, who could reach out without fear for the imperial regalia. Then, after the missing line, the poet, addressing the Thracians, warns of a dismal future and appeals to them to end the quarrels among "yourselves" (Byzantines), i.e., Thracians and φίλοι. We can only guess about the identity of the "he" from the missing line: the Bulgarian ruler who threatens Thrace with the danger of invasion; the Russian ruler who, as Svjatoslav once did, will change from ally to enemy; or Basil himself, whose policy of misalliance with the Rus' could lead "the Thracians" into slavery.

The tenor of the verse is one of concern, but it is caustic toward "the Thracians." If this interpretation is accepted, it can be assumed that the poem was written sometime in 987–88, probably with reference to the negotiations for the alliance between Basil and Vladimir. The content of this verse, as I understand it, corresponds fully with the poet's disapproval of his time, which he saw as a negation of the splendor enjoyed under Nicephorus Phocas. Did the poet's weakness for this dead Emperor extend also to the Emperor's nephew?

Another poem, probably written by John Geometres, might throw some light on the Byzantine attitude toward the Russes, if the date of its composition can be determined. This is the poem on Nicephorus Phocas, which is incorporated by Scylitzes in his *Synopsis* as an epitaph and is attributed to John, metropolitan of Melitene, who is identified chiefly with Geometres by modern scholars.<sup>66</sup> Until now this poem has been dated to shortly after the

Petkova, in *Fontes graeci historiae bulgaricae*, V (Sofia, 1964), 319. Very free translations and an association with the events of about 969–70 have been proposed by Balasčev, *Bŭlgariŭ* (note 26 *supra*), 29–30, and P. O. Karyškovskij, "K istorii balkanskih vojn Svjatoslava," *VizVrem*, N.S. 7 (1953), 228–29.

<sup>66</sup> *Scylitzae synopsis*, 282; Cedrenus, II, 378; the poem has been published several times: cf. I. Ševčenko, "Poems on the Deaths of Leo VI and Constantine VII in the Madrid Manuscript of Scylitzes," *DOP*, 23–24 (1969–70), 189–90; Russian translation by Vasil'evskij, *Trudy*, II, 114–15; rather free German by G. Soyter, *Byzantinische Dichtung* (Athens, 1938), 41–42. For the translation of the fragment of the poem published here I am indebted to Elizabeth Jeffreys. Recently, the authorship of the poem has been questioned: "Les rapports de Jean Géomètre avec Nicéphore sont connus, mais de là à conclure, ne tenant compte que du style de quelques vers, à l'identité de Jean le Géomètre avec Jean de Mélitène, il y a loin. Il faudrait une preuve beaucoup plus décisive" (J. Darrouzès, "Inventaire des épistoliers byzantins du X<sup>e</sup> siècle," *REB*, 18 [1960], 120). But Scheidweiler, on the basis of his studies of the texts, remarks concerning the poems on Nicephorus Phocas that "Der Dichter ist John Geometres, daran ist kein Zweifel" ("Studien," 307–9). Ševčenko, who takes these doubts into account, tentatively ascribes the poem to John Geometres ("Poems," 191 note 16, 223). Vasil'-

death of Nicephorus Phocas (December 11, 969) and connected with Svjatoslav's campaign against Byzantium in 970. The poem is essentially an appeal to the murdered Emperor to rise from the dead and protect the city (Constantinople) against the Russes. The lines most interesting for our purposes are the following:

ὁρμᾷ καθ' ἡμῶν Ῥωσικὴ πανοπλία,  
 Σκυθῶν ἔσθνη σφύλουσιν εἰς φονουργίας,  
 λεηλατοῦσι πᾶν ἔθνος\* τὴν σὺν πόλιν,  
 οὕς ἐπτόει πρὶν καὶ γεγραμμένος τύπος  
 πρὸ τῶν πυλῶν σὸς ἐν πόλει Βυζαντίου.

A Russian army charges against us,  
 tribes of Scythians are eager for murder,  
 every nation\* plunders your city,  
 (peoples) whom formerly your graven image  
 before the gates of the city of Byzantium terrified.

\* Here the meaning seems to be "any nation," "all comers."

Poetic license alone cannot explain these verses about the presence of Russian warriors in the most holy city itself. It is true that Svjatoslav had given the Byzantines good cause for fright. He had promised, if one believes Leo the Deacon, that "he would soon be pitching his own tents beneath the walls of Constantinople"; but the Russian army came only within a hundred miles of the capital, where it was successfully halted by Arcadiopolis in the spring of 970. One of the first measures taken by John Tzimiskes as emperor was to relocate the army commanded by Sclerus to winter quarters in Mysia; thus, from the beginning, the capital was well protected.<sup>67</sup> The poet's assertion that only Nicephorus could save the Empire would not, therefore, accord with Tzimiskes' action against the Russes. The poet's gloomy presentation might be explained by his strong antipathy toward the new Emperor and his mistress, Theophano (widow of Nicephorus and mother of Basil II), but the false accusation about Russian plunder in the city would only weaken the political trend of the poem. Scheidweiler, finding that such a literary production would have been very risky, supposed that John Geometres could not have released the epitaph to Nicephorus during Tzimiskes' lifetime, and that perhaps he made it public after becoming metropolitan of Melitene.<sup>67a</sup> More

evskij, who dated this epitaph to 970–72 (*Trudy*, II, 115), noted that only two lines of the poem, if they were to be interpreted literally, seem to contradict this dating (cf. *Scylitzae synopsis*, 282, lines 70–71):

ὁ μὴδὲ νυξὶ μικρὸν ὑπνῶσκειν θέλων	He who was unwilling to sleep briefly even at night
ἐν τῷ τάφῳ νῦν μακρὸν ὑπνῶσκει χρόνον.	Now sleeps for a long time in the grave.

But the phrase "for a long time" can be interpreted in many different ways; so I reject this poet's observation as an argument for my later dating of the poem.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Leo Diaconus, 105–11; *Scylitzae synopsis*, 287–91; Cedrenus, II, 383–88. P. Karyškovskij, "O hronologii russko-vizantijskih vojn pri Svjatoslave," *VizVrem*, N.S. 5 (1952), 135–38; A. D. Stokes, "The Balkan Campaigns of Svjatoslav Igorevich," *SlEERev*, 40 (1962), 491–94.

<sup>67a</sup> "Studien," 307–9 and note 4 on p. 309.

simply, it can be suggested that this poem was written nearly twenty years after Nicephorus Phocas' death. What are the arguments in support of this thesis?

First and foremost is the poem's statement about the presence of the Russian army in the capital, which actually occurred after 988/89, as a result of the agreement between Basil and Vladimir. What, then, are the Russes doing in the capital, according to the poet? They are plundering the imperial city, but though "eager for murder," they only plunder. This situation corresponds to the presence of the Russian contingent in Constantinople before the battles of Chrysopolis and Abydus. The behavior of foreign allied troops is always troublesome for the host country, and the visiting Russian warriors were no exception. The poet simply exaggerated the existing situation, either reflecting rumor or indulging his own prejudices, which, of course, is not exceptional.

Finally, all of Asia Minor was rife with rumors hostile to Basil and his policy, and the pretender and his followers were vitally interested in them. Stories such as those told by Leo about the impalement by Russes of 20,000 inhabitants of Philippopolis in 970 were surely revived, and incited the imagination of the Byzantines. The poet, if not directly involved in the rivalry between Basil and Bardas Phocas, was no doubt kindly disposed toward the nephew of his hero.

Such an appeal to this hero could be expressed in verse at any time after his death, but political poetry, addressed to contemporaries and seeking an echo in society, contains a certain reality which can result even from the poet's own interpretation. During the reign of Tzimiskes, the circumstances for such an appeal were unfavorable, but they were fitting for the time of Basil, especially in the eighties. In the political verse Εἰς τὸν κομιτόπολον, John Geometres appeals to Nicephorus to "come for a little from the grave" to teach the Bulgarians a lesson. Recently, this verse was dated convincingly to about 986/87.<sup>68</sup> Further, the verse written by John Geometres concerning the reasons for the Byzantine defeat of August 16–17, 986, contains an unmistakable allusion to Nicephorus Phocas.<sup>69</sup> Even if John Geometres did not compose the epitaph to Nicephorus, this would only strengthen the conviction that at that time, i.e., the last two decades of the tenth century, John Geometres and Leo the Deacon were not alone in their nostalgia for the days of Nicephorus, the very symbol of the Empire's prosperity.

There is one more piece of evidence of the prejudice against the Rhôs during the reign of Basil II which better reflects public sentiment than the personal feelings of a historian and deacon at the court, and of a poet and metropolitan.

<sup>68</sup> A. Leroy-Molinghen, "Les fils de Pierre de Bulgarie et les Cométopoules," *Byzantion*, 42 (1972), 405–19; and P. Orgels, "Les deux Comètes de Jean Geomètre," *ibid.*, 420–22. Earlier, the verse "On the Comet" was connected with the comet of 975, and dated to a time shortly after its appearance; cf. Vasil'evskij, *Trudy*, II, 116. Scheidweiler accepted this date, but noted that the content of the verse "ist geschichtlich falsch und ungerecht gegen Tzimiskes" ("Studien," 313). The later dating adds a new dimension to this matter.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca*, IV, 296; Vasil'evskij, *Trudy*, II, 117; Scheidweiler, "Studien," 313–14; *Fontes graeci* (note 65 *supra*), 320.

This mention of Russes in a topographical guidebook to the curiosities of Constantinople, the so-called Πάτρια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, has attracted the attention of historians. Among the descriptions of many monuments of the capital is one of an equestrian statue in the Forum of Taurus which, according to tradition, was brought from Antioch. On the pedestal of this statue were bas-reliefs depicting "the last days of the City, when the Rhôs should destroy it."<sup>70</sup> The prediction that the Russes would destroy Constantinople testifies to the fear of the Rhôs which had ignited the popular imagination more deeply than fear of the Arabs or the Bulgarians. This odd belief probably had its origin in the completely unexpected attack by the Rhôs on Constantinople in 860. For our purposes it is important that this conviction existed when the above-mentioned *Patria* was compiled after 989, around the year 995; the date was established by Th. Preger.<sup>71</sup> Thus, despite the new relationship between Basil and Vladimir a few years after Abydos and the continuing participation of Russian crack troops in battles on the Bulgarian and Syrian fronts, popular sentiment had not changed. A newcomer, visiting the Forum of Taurus at the turn of the tenth century, would have heard the same commentary on the bas-reliefs of the monument. Perhaps the presence of Russian allied troops in the capital in 988–89 was so distressing that it inspired an apocalyptic vision of the end of the city with the complicity of the Rhôs.

Surely this obsession with "the end of the city and the end of history" were connected with the rise of millenarian beliefs, but it is significant that the inhabitants of the center of the Empire saw the Russes as the future destroyers of their city and the precursors of the end. There is no doubt that Basil's new policy toward Kiev was greeted by many with misgivings and anxiety about the future of the Empire, and in popular circles this fear was translated into the language of eschatological prophecy.

A second argument against the thesis formulated here is supported by the matrimonial tradition of the Byzantine emperors. The prohibition against marrying barbarians—that is, foreigners and infidels—was frequently repeated, although, for reasons of political expediency, the emperors did occasionally enter into such misalliances. Constantine Porphyrogenitus firmly upheld the

<sup>70</sup> *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum*, ed. Th. Preger, II (Leipzig, 1907), 176. Some historians, in references to the *Patria Constantinopoleos*, are misleading in their reports of the inscription. It seems more likely from the text that the anonymous author of the *Patria* recorded an oral interpretation of the sculptured scenes.

<sup>71</sup> Th. Preger, *Beiträge zur Textgeschichte der Πάτρια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* (Munich, 1895), 4–6. As far as I know, this date has never been questioned, but scholars generally prefer to use a less precise dating, "from the end of the tenth century" or "at the close of the tenth century." Cf. also C. Diehl, "De quelques croyances byzantines sur la fin de Constantinople," *BZ*, 30 (1930), 192, 194–95; A. A. Vasiliev, "Medieval Ideas of the End of the World: West and East," *Byzantion*, 16 (1942–43), 462, 470–71, 478f., 487–95; *idem*, *The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860* (Cambridge, Mass., 1946), 242; P. J. Alexander, "Historiens byzantins et croyances eschatologiques," *XII<sup>e</sup> Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines. Résumés des Communications* (Belgrade-Ochrid, 1961), 2; D. A. Miller, *Imperial Constantinople* (New York, 1969), 159–62. Miller makes an interesting remark that the unknown writer of the *Patria* "may have been responding to the campaigns of Svjatoslav . . . or even to the presence of the Varangian guard in the city" (*ibid.*, 162).

strict injunction against the emperor's family marrying any other *ethnos*, especially "any of these shifty and dishonorable tribes of the north," and warned that "he who dared to do it was to be condemned as an alien from the ranks of the Christians and subject to the anathema, as a transgressor of ancestral laws and imperial ordinances." When Liutprand of Cremona came to Constantinople in 968 as the ambassador of Otto I to negotiate a marriage for the German Emperor's son, he was told: "It is an unheard of thing that a daughter born in the purple of an emperor born in the purple should marry a foreigner."<sup>72</sup>

Thus, the conviction has grown, as if there were direct source evidence for it, that Vladimir could not have been accorded this honor without extreme pressure on his part, which the capture of Cherson could have provided. However, while this honor had twenty years earlier been denied the German Emperor, who far outranked the Russian King in international status and power, the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus Phocas was not in such desperate straits as was Basil II. This disparity was not lost on contemporaries of both Emperors. Hence, one must take into account not the imperial doctrine but the political reality.

The situation of the legitimate dynasty was critical. The year 987 left Basil an emperor without an empire. All the Asian provinces had fallen to the rebellious Bardas Phocas, and in most of the European provinces the Bulgars were dominant.<sup>73</sup> Most important was the fact that the Armenians and the Iberians supported Phocas; these crack troops, especially the Iberians, had been the Empire's strongest military force.<sup>74</sup> Basil could not rely upon the Greeks either. Psellus wrote: "In opposition to Basil, the greater part of the army ranged beside Bardas Phocas, who had won over the leading and most powerful families . . . . The Emperor Basil was well aware of disloyalty among the Romans . . . . It was no longer in imagination, but in very truth, that Bardas Phocas put on the imperial robes, with the emperor's crown and the royal insignia of purple."<sup>75</sup> In order to save his crown, Basil had to take radical action.

On April 4, 988, Basil finally repealed for domestic reasons Nicephorus Phocas' law of 964 against monastic and ecclesiastical possessions. Some

<sup>72</sup> *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio*, § 13, ed. Gy. Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest, 1949), 70–73; *Liudprandi Legatio*, Bonn ed. (1828), 350. Cf. Ostrogorsky, "Vladimir" (note 2 *supra*), 34–36; Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 196–97; references to bibliography: *De Administrando Imperio* (hereafter, *DAI*), II, *Commentary*, ed. R. J. H. Jenkins (London, 1962), 67–68.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Yahyā, in Rozen, *Imperator*, 27; and in PO, 23, p. 430; Zlatarski, *Istorija* (note 26 *supra*), II, 675–87; I. Dujčev, "Napadenija na car Samuel v oblata na Lariso prez 987–989," *Sbornik na Bŭlgarskata AN*, 41 (1945), 20–24.

<sup>74</sup> The Armenians supporting Bardas Sclerus had taken part in the revolt from its beginning, whereas the Iberians had been an important part of the Byzantine army commanded by Bardas Phocas. When the latter revolted, he also received military aid from the ruler of Upper Tao, David. Cf. Asoghik, III, §§ 24, 25; Yahyā, in Rozen, *Imperator*, 22, 24, 26, 27; and in PO, 23, pp. 421–24, 427–29; Psellus, *Chronographia*, I, § 10. The Iberians had put down the revolt of Bardas Sclerus in 979. Cf. M. Tarchnišvili, "Die Anfänge der schriftstellerischen Tätigkeit des hl. Euthymius und der Aufstand von Bardas Skleros," *OrChr*, 38 (1954), 123–24; N. Lomouri, "K istorii vosstanija Vardy Sklira," *Trudy Tbilisskogo gosud. universiteta*, 67 (1957), 29–46.

<sup>75</sup> Psellus, *Chronographia*, I, §§ 10, 13; trans. Sewter, 15, 17.

scholars doubt that the chrysobull is genuine because this decree had already been repealed by Tzimisces. In addition, the pro-monastic emphasis of this document contradicts the subsequent edict of 996, in which Basil tried to restrict the extension of ecclesiastical property, in apparent disregard of his repeal of 988.<sup>76</sup> But since textual tradition supports the reliability of the novel of 988,<sup>77</sup> the contradiction seems to lie, not in the documents, but in the circumstances of the times. In 988 Basil needed the support of the Church. Even if the novel of Nicephorus had been revoked, or unenforced after 969, Basil's disassociation from it was well timed; he writes in his chrysobull, "... a law whose issuance was unjust and insolent not only to the churches and the pious institutions but to God Himself, has been the cause and source of the present evils and of the general upheaval and disturbance . . . ."<sup>78</sup> This explicit declaration of his Church policy put an end to rumors fanned by his enemies.<sup>79</sup> By 996 the crisis was over, and Basil could take some measures against lay and ecclesiastical land magnates. But he avoided any allusion to the more radical and extensive edict of Nicephorus Phocas.

In the arena of international politics, between September 987 and April 988 Basil negotiated an accord with the Fatimid Caliphate of Egypt. It was no coincidence that at a time when the eastern part of the Empire was under the rule of Phocas, Basil sent an embassy to Cairo and accepted, according to Arab historians, "distressing terms."<sup>80</sup> This was a diplomatic strike at the usurper, but for a military action a strong army, such as that of the Rus', was needed. Byzantine emperors had called upon this army before, but because of the loss of his Armenian and Iberian troops, Basil needed a reliable force.

<sup>76</sup> F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, I (Munich, 1924), nos. 772, 783; Ostrogorsky, *History* (note 2 *supra*), 293 note 2, 306–7.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. N. Svoronos, *La Synopsis Major des Basiliques et ses appendices* (Paris, 1964), 22, 39, 61, 85, 97, 155, 157, 168.

<sup>78</sup> *Jus Graeco-Romanum*, ed. C. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, III (Leipzig, 1856), 303–4; English trans. in P. Charanis, "Monastic Properties and the State in the Byzantine Empire," *DOP*, 4 (1948), 62.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Charanis, "Monastic Properties," 60–64; A. P. Kazdan, *Derevnja i gorod v Vizantii IX–X vv.* (Moscow, 1960), 74. Charanis, arguing for the authenticity of the novel of April 988, thinks that Phocas' novel against the monasteries was not repealed until the reign of Basil II (cf. *ibid.*, 61 note 23). But the assumption that it could not have been cancelled twice is only legally correct. In December 969, the new Emperor John Tzimisces probably repealed Nicephorus Phocas' novel by damaging it or returning it to the Synod (cf. Dölger, *Regesten*, 726), although no written statement was submitted to the Church until 988. Because of the pessimistic tone of this novel, its date of April 4, 988, is commonly seen as the terminus post quem of the arrival of Russian troops in the imperial city. This inference results from an oversimplification, that Russian help was the crucial remedy, and from a failure to see the different aspects of Basil's action. The date of the novel is not important here.

<sup>80</sup> Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 770 (end of 987); Rozen, *Imperator*, 202–5; M. Canard, *Histoire de la Dynastie des H'amdanides de Jazira et de Syrie*, I (Algiers, 1951), 853–55. The embassy is dated by Abu'l Mahasin and al-'Aini to a.h. 377 (May 3, 987–April 20, 988), and its necessity arose sometime after Bardas Phocas' treason (September 14, 987).

It was a shaky peace; hostilities were resumed in 991. But it is not true that "Basil II was obliged to sign this treaty" (M. Canard, in *CMH*, IV, pt. 1 [1966], 724), because the presence of the Fatimid army on the southeast border of the Empire, at that time under Bardas Phocas' rule, served Basil's purposes. Perhaps he merely wanted to prevent an agreement between Phocas and Egypt. It is also possible that "Emperor" Bardas Phocas himself negotiated with the Fatimid Caliph; the information given by both fourteenth-century Arab historians, who used a common source, is too general and does not give the Emperor's name. A clause in this treaty, which requests the mention of the Caliph's name in prayers at the mosque in Constantinople, might point to the actual rather than the potential master of the capital.

The question was whether he could be sure of the Rus'. The Russian King Svjatoslav had taught the Byzantines a bitter lesson: although he had been paid handsomely in the finest gold, Svjatoslav, when called upon to repress the Bulgars, had demonstrated political ambitions of his own. It is true that in a Byzantino-Russian treaty concluded in July 971 Svjatoslav had declared: "If any foe plans to attack your [Byzantine] realm, I shall resist him and go to war against him." But the promise of a Russian king killed by Patzinaks at Byzantine instigation could hardly carry much weight.<sup>81</sup>

The idea of a new appeal to the Rus' must have filled the Emperor and his entourage with some misgivings, but Basil had no choice. He had to protect himself against surprises and assure himself of continued armed support, and the best possible solution appeared to be a matrimonial relationship between the two dynasties. Since for some time Kiev had been ready and willing to adopt Christianity, this alliance could be established as a religious partnership.

Of course, for Vladimir the alliance was an exceptional honor, but Basil was vitally interested in such a connection. Not long before, Basil's grandfather Constantine Porphyrogenitus had admitted with distaste that his father-in-law Romanus Lecapenus had given his granddaughter to the tsar of Bulgaria. Romanus was "a common, illiterate fellow . . . not from among those who . . . followed the Roman national customs . . . [and was] of a temper arrogant and self-willed . . . ."<sup>82</sup> The same criticisms were surely leveled against Basil, but in a short time it became clear that he was following Roman national interests. Thus I conclude that the real initiator of Vladimir and Anna's marriage was the Emperor Basil himself, and in this case, the Cherson legend shows more knowledge of imperial matrimonial customs than of historical realities.

The foregoing analysis of possible counter-arguments neither proves nor disproves my thesis, although the acquired insight into the historical context makes it more convincing. But what support is there for the theory that Cherson was in revolt against Basil?

The history of Cherson reveals that this once autonomous Greek city never gave up its separatist tendencies, even during the tenth and eleventh centuries, which led to a compromise: the dual power of a military governor and a primate of the Chersonite municipality.<sup>83</sup> The situation was so special and so important for the Empire that Constantine Porphyrogenitus gave much attention to the history of, and imperial policy toward, the city in his *De Administrando Imperio*. Recommending that local authority not be trusted, he repeated the advice given to Emperor Theophilus: "If you wish complete mastery and dominion

<sup>81</sup> Cf. PSRL, I, cols. 71–74; Cross, *Chronicle*, 88–90; *Scylitzae synopsis*, 309–10; Cedrenus, II, 412–13. In the light of both sources, there is no doubt of Byzantine involvement in the final defeat of Svjatoslav's army on the rapids of the Dnieper. For Byzantino-Russian relations under Svjatoslav, cf. Levčenko, *Očerki*, 252–90; Stokes, "Balkan Campaigns" (note 67 *supra*), 466–96; Pašuto, *Vneš-njaja politika* (note 2 *supra*), 69–73.

<sup>82</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *DAI*, § 13, p. 73.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Šestakov, *Očerki* (note 53 *supra*), 57–94; A. A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), 87–135; Jakobson, *Rannesrednevekovyj Hersones* (note 6 *supra*), 35–66; A. F. Višnjakova, "Svncovye pečati vizantijskogo Hersonesa," *VestDrIst*, 1(6) (1939), 121–33.

over the city of Cherson and of the places in Cherson, and that they should not slip out of your hand, appoint your own military governor and do not trust in their primates and nobles." Most instructive is the passage about the vigorous reprisals ordered against Chersonite men and property in the event of a revolt. In particular, the Emperor ordered that all Chersonite ships with cargo along the coast of the provinces of the Armeniakoi, of Paphlagonia, and of Boukellarian must be confiscated. Then the "imperial agents must forbid the Paphlagonian and Boukellarian merchant ships and coastal vessels of the Pontus to cross to Cherson with grain or wine or any other necessary commodity or merchandise." The Emperor's conclusion is also worth quoting: "If the Chersonites do not journey to Romania and sell the hides and wax that they get by trade from the Patzinaks, they cannot live. If grain does not pass across from Aminsos and from Paphlagonia and the Boukellarioi and the flanks of the Armeniakoi, the Chersonites cannot live."<sup>84</sup> Thus, the Byzantine Emperor clarifies the economic basis of Cherson's political orientation, i.e., that whoever had control of the above-mentioned provinces on the Black Sea had the key to Cherson. Since 987 this had been the usurper Bardas Phocas, who occupied all the ports and coastal cities in Asia Minor excluding Abydos.<sup>85</sup> Economic reasons alone, therefore, were sufficient for Cherson's recognition of the real ruler of Asia Minor.

However, there do seem to be some political reasons as well behind Chersonian support of Bardas Phocas, from whom the city could look forward to more autonomy. Traces of political tension between Byzantium and Cherson are discernible at the end of the sixties, when Cherson played an important role in Byzantino-Russian relations. Kalokyros, son of the Chersonian primate (and very likely a primate himself), who was made *patricius* by Nicephorus Phocas, recruited Svjatoslav for the expedition against the Bulgars, and then, according to Leo the Deacon, with the help of the Russian ruler, made a bid for the imperial crown itself.<sup>86</sup> We don't know what eventually happened to Kalokyros because, unfortunately, little is known of the history of Cherson at this time. Thanks to the entanglement, which was favorable for Cherson, of Byzantine, Khazar, Russian, and finally Patzinak political and economic affairs in the Crimea, the city apparently still enjoyed some autonomy.<sup>87</sup> It is too risky to

<sup>84</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *DAI*, §§ 42, 53, pp. 185, 259–87; cf. *Commentary*, II, 209.

<sup>85</sup> Leo Diaconus, 173.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 63, 77, 79, 134; *Scylitzae synopsis*, 277, 288, 295; Cedrenus, II, 372, 383–84, 394; N. D. Znojko, "O posol'stvě Kalokira v' Kiev'," *ŽMNP*, N.S., pt. 8 (April, 1907), 229–72. In the Dumbarton Oaks Collection there are a few seals of Spatharocandidatus Kalokyros, dated to the tenth century (D.O. 58.106:1029, 2258, 3866, 3848).

<sup>87</sup> The treaty of 971 concluded between Svjatoslav and Tzimisces seems to accentuate the special status of Cherson, to whom Svjatoslav undertook an obligation:

"... jako nikoliže pomyšlu na stranu [ἡ χώρα?] vašju ni sbiraju voi (ljudii) ni jazyka [τὸ ἔθνος?] ni inogo privedu na stranu vašju i eliko est' pod' vlast'ju [ἡ ἐξουσία or ἡ ἀρχή?] greč'skoju: ni na vlast' [ἡ ἀρχή or ἡ χώρα?] Korsun'skuju i eliko est' gorodov'ih'ni na stranu Bolgar'sku..."

"... never to be ill-intentioned toward your country nor to collect warriors (people) or to lead other nations against your country and those which are under Greek rule: neither against the Khersonian dominion and those cities which belong to it, nor against the Bulgarian land..."

This treaty was translated from the Greek, and hypothetical words of the original text are given in brackets. The Old Russian text is published in PSRL, I, col. 73, and II, cols. 60–61, with one se-



attempt to identify the Chersonian Kalokyros with the *patricius* Kalokyros "Delphinus," who was governor of Byzantine Italy in the early eighties<sup>88</sup> and in 988 commanded the usurper's troops at Chrysopolis. Taken prisoner, he was impaled by order of Basil.<sup>89</sup>

There was probably a distressing political situation in Cherson before 989 at the time of the civil war, since even during the stable time of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in the fifties, the court had to contend constantly with insubordination and revolt in the city. Its return, plundered and partially ruined, to imperial authority in 889 did not end this ferment, which later led to open revolt, suppressed in 1016, with the help of the Rus', by the Emperor Basil's navy.<sup>90</sup>

Returning to the so-called Cherson legend, it is easier now to understand its failure to offer an explanation for the Cherson expedition. While the citizens had no desire to recall their disloyalty to the legal emperors, they were anxious to connect events in Cherson with the Russian conversion and to emphasize the usefulness of their city for imperial policy in the north. The most accurate part of the legend concerns the ecclesiastical equipment and treasures which were taken from Cherson as booty for the new churches in Kiev.<sup>91</sup> The legend contains few realistic details regarding the siege, but the suggestion that the city was subjected to a naval blockade permits us to conclude that the siege began before the winter of 988.<sup>92</sup> Because of secret information given to Vladi-

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mantic difference—*voi* (warriors) in the Laurentian MS and *ljudii* (people) in the Hypatian MS. The translation by Cross, *Chronicle*, 89–90, is inaccurate. On the position of Cherson in the treaty of 944, see *infra*, notes 144, 145.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. V. von Falkenhausen, *Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Herrschaft in Süditalien vom 9. bis ins 11. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1967), 84, 168–70.

<sup>89</sup> Leo Diaconus, 173–74; *Scylitzae synopsis*, 336. There can be no doubt that Kalokyros, katepan of Italy (982–84), was also the follower of Bardas Phocas. The absence of "Delphinus" as a nickname for Kalokyros about 970 can be easily understood, but it would be harder to explain if "Delphinus" were a patronymic, which would lead us in the eleventh century to Thessalia (cf. *Sovety i rasskazy Kekavmena*, ed. and commentary G. G. Litavrin [Moscow, 1972], 256–57, 527–28). But most at variance with this identification is the account of Leo the Deacon, for whom the Kalokyros of around 970 and the Kalokyros of 988 are two different people. Reference to the complicated sources of Leo's *History* (cf. Každan, "Iz istorii" [note 61 *supra*], 106–28, and P. Karyškovskij, "Balkanskie vojny Svjatoslava v Vizantijskoj istoričeskoj literature," *VizVrem*, N.S. 6 [1953], 54–56) does nothing to clarify these matters. The fact is that Leo was a contemporary of these people and events; he was in the capital in 967, at age eighteen or nineteen (cf. Panagiotakes, Λέων [note 62 *supra*], 4–5), when Nicephorus Phocas sent Kalokyros to Kiev, and he would surely have identified two well-known personages who figured prominently in important events of the time if in fact they had been one and the same person. A dignitary named Kalokyros is known from the end of the tenth century, but the supposition that all the Kalokyroi originated in Cherson (cf. J. Darrouzès, *Epistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle* [Paris, 1960], 169–70, 355–56) seems doubtful.

<sup>90</sup> *Scylitzae synopsis*, 354–55; Cedrenus, II, 464. Cf. I. V. Sokolova, "Pečati Georgija Culy i sobytija 1016 g. v Hersone," *Palestinskij Sbornik*, 23/86 (1971), 68–74. Cf. A. P. Každan, in *Byzantinoslavica*, 33 (1972), 298.

<sup>91</sup> The most impressive trophy, the captured quadriga, was still on public display at the beginning of the twelfth century. Cf. Cross, *Chronicle*, 116: "Vladimir also found and appropriated two bronze statues and four bronze horses, which now stand behind the Church of the Holy Virgin, and which the ignorant think are made of marble."

<sup>92</sup> For arguments in support of a very long siege, cf. A. Berthier-Delagarde, "Kak Vladimir osaždal Korsun'," *Izvestija Otdelenija russkago jazyka i slovesnosti AN*, vol. 14, bk. 1 (1909), 252–57; N. V. Pjatyševa, "'Zemljanoj put'," *rasskaza o pohode Vladimira na Korsun'*, *SovArh* (1964), pt. 3, pp. 104–14.

mir by a Chersonite called Anastasius, the water supply was cut off and the city surrendered. Anastasius of Cherson was a real person who played a role in the events of the year 1018 in Kiev.<sup>93</sup> Consequently, it is possible to determine the reasons for the city's capture shortly after April 13. When the news of Basil's victory at Abydus reached Cherson, the partisans of the Emperor took heart. They were too weak to change the policy of the city, which was counting on the new revolt of Bardas Sclerus, but they were able to help the Emperor by contributing toward its surrender to Vladimir.

#### IV. Byzantium and Rus': an Attempt to Reconstruct the Course of Events between 986–89

From the foregoing discussion we can attempt to reconstruct the events that on one hand led the Byzantine Empire out of the morass of civil war and on the other brought Kievan Russia into the sphere of Christian civilization. Essential to a reconstruction of the chronology of events are the date of the agreement between Emperor Basil II and King Vladimir I and the date of its fulfillment by both parties.

The severe military defeat and more painful loss of prestige in a battle with the Bulgars on August 17, 986, caused Basil II to revise the Byzantine policy toward the Bulgars, which had been formulated by Tzimiscēs.<sup>94</sup> By that time, the young Emperor must have already realized that the Byzantine defeat in the battle of Trajan's Gates was due not only to the success of the Bulgar troops but also to the scheming of the higher military aristocracy, whose influence had diminished or whose position was imperiled, and who thought that this Emperor, suspicious, independent, and inexperienced in military affairs, should be taught a lesson.<sup>95</sup> The Emperor, seeking revenge, but not at the price of concessions to this aristocracy against whom his suspicions appeared to be justified, was forced to look for an ally who would be able to suppress the rebellious Bulgars. The conquest of the Bulgars by Svjatoslav suggested the idea of renewing the agreements of the treaties of 945 and 971 that provided for Russian military aid against the enemies of Byzantium. It is

<sup>93</sup> Cf. PSRL, I, cols. 109, 116, 121, 124, 144; Cross, *Chronicle*, 112, 116, 119, 121, 132; but the identification of Anastasius with the archbishop of Kiev mentioned by Thietmar, Bishop of Merseberg, *Chronici libri VIII*, ed. F. Kurze (Hannover, 1889), IX, 32, p. 258, is wrong (cf. Cross, *Chronicle*, note 140 on p. 254). For Anastasius' position in Kiev, cf. Müller, *Zum Problem* (note 4 *supra*), 42–47, and Poppe, *Państwo*, 46–48.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Ostrogorsky, *History*, 295–96, 300–3; R. Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria* (London, 1975), 71–75.

<sup>95</sup> Leo Diaconus, 171, speaks of the incompetence of commanders. John Scylitzes' report implies a climate of suspicion and charges of treason, which were probably unjust, but there is no doubt that high-ranking army officers did not like Emperor Basil. See *Scylitzae synopsis*, 331–32; Cedrenus, II, 436–38; Psellus, *Chronographia*, I, § 30, vol. I, pp. 18–19; cf. Rozen, *Imperator*, 20, 172–74; Vasil'evskij, *Trudy*, II, 85–87; Ostrogorsky, *History*, 305–6, and *idem*, "Observations on the Aristocracy in Byzantium," *DOP*, 25 (1971), 7; cf. also A. Každan, *Social'nyj sostav gosподstvujuščego klassa Vizantii XI–XII vv.* (Moscow, 1974), 206–9, 255–56.

most probably with this end in view that contacts with Kiev were made, shortly after the painful retreat from Bulgaria.<sup>96</sup> A few months later, when the Byzantine aristocracy, encouraged by the Emperor's lack of success, openly declared themselves against the Macedonian dynasty, Basil had no choice but to smash their political ambitions.

The news of the crushing defeat of Basil's armies by the Bulgars resulted in a new revolt by Bardas Sclerus in December 986. Aided in Baghdad by the emir of Buwayhid Samsam al-daulah, he reached Melitene early in February 987 and proclaimed himself emperor.<sup>97</sup> With the help of troops recruited from Arab nomads and Kurds, and especially with the support of the Armenian population in the eastern provinces of Byzantium, Sclerus extended his rule within the month as far as Sebaste. The metropolitan of Sebaste, Theophylact, fearing reprisals by the local Armenian population, fled to the capital.<sup>98</sup> Basil II sought the help of the talented commander and ambitious politician, Bardas Phocas, though the latter was suspected of having taken part in the *paracoemomenus* plot in 985. Phocas had defeated Sclerus once before, in 979.<sup>99</sup> Basil distrusted Phocas from the beginning, but he had no other choice and probably counted on the animosity that still existed between the two old rivals. In April 987 he restored the title of *domesticus* of the East to Bardas Phocas and appointed him commander-in-chief of the army, which consisted of Greek and Iberian units, against Sclerus. Though he had sworn allegiance to the Emperor on everything holy, Phocas did not keep his oath. Without delay, probably as early as April or May, he began negotiations through Constantine, his brother-in-law and the brother of Bardas Sclerus.<sup>100</sup> After agreeing to the division of the Empire, the two claimants to the throne met twice. The first meeting was held on the Djeyhan River, halfway between Antioch and Melitene, not later than the beginning of July and perhaps as

<sup>96</sup> Abū Shujā' Rudhrawari's mention of the exchange of correspondence between the two Emperors and the Russian King (see *supra*, pp. 206–7 and note 41) indicates that the negotiations were in progress in autumn 986, if we assume that the alliance itself was contracted in late summer or early autumn 987.

<sup>97</sup> Sclerus and his men were released in the month of Shāban 376 (December 6, 986–January 3, 987) and left Baghdad in that same month, arriving in Melitene in February 987 (Yahyā, in PO, 23, p. 420; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 22). Asoghik, III, § 24, who dates these events toward the end of the year 435 of the Armenian cycle (March 25, 986–March 24, 987), says that Arab nomads "conducted Sclerus hurriedly to Melitene, situated thirty-one days from Baghdad" (*Des Stephanos von Taron*, 187; *Histoire universelle*, 128; *Vseobščaja istorija*, 177). The journey could not have lasted longer, so Sclerus reached Melitene in the beginning of February 987.

<sup>98</sup> Asoghik, III, §§ 20, 22, connects with the year 435 of the Armenian cycle Theophylact's conflict with Armenian priests and the Emperor's calling him to diplomatic tasks in Bulgaria; thus, Theophylact must have left Sebaste before March 24, 987. The real reason for the departure was not the summons of the Emperor (for more detail, see *supra*, pp. 204–5) but the rebellion of Bardas Sclerus. Sebaste, populated mostly by Armenians and situated 120 miles from Melitene, could have declared itself for the usurper several days after the fall of Melitene.

<sup>99</sup> See Leo Diaconus, 170; *Scylitzae synopsis*, 324–27; Yahyā, in PO, 23, p. 399; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 3, 12, 20; Asoghik, III, § 15 (*Des Stephanos von Taron*, 141–42; *Vseobščaja istorija*, 135); Psellus, *Chronographia*, I, §§ 5, 9, vol. I, pp. 4–6; cf. Vasil'evskij, *Trudy*, II, 59–60.

<sup>100</sup> Yahyā, in PO, 23, pp. 419, 421–22; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 20, 22–23: "Basil felt the necessity of returning to Bardas Phocas the title of *domesticus* in the month of Dul Hijja 376 [April 3–May 2, 987]," but Phocas, who was at that time (from the end of 985) "the governor of Antioch and all districts of the East" could have contacted Sclerus even before his nomination.

early as June.<sup>101</sup> The negotiations and the agreement, mediated by Constantine Sclerus, might have taken place in April or May or, at the very latest, in June. It was about this time that Basil II learned of the treason of Bardas Phocas. He received reliable information about the secret agreement between the two usurpers from Roman, son of Sclerus, who did not trust Phocas, and who, suspecting some plot against his father, had departed for Constantinople.<sup>102</sup>

At the second meeting, Bardas Phocas imprisoned Bardas Sclerus through a clever ruse and openly proclaimed himself emperor, according to Scylitzes on August 15 and according to Yaḥyā on Holy Cross Day, Wednesday September 14, 987.<sup>103</sup> Since the information given by Scylitzes is not as accurate as that of Yaḥyā, the earlier date may refer to the confinement of Sclerus, since between the dates of the imprisonment of the latter in the Tyropoion fortress (Jérôs)<sup>104</sup> and the proclamation of Phocas as emperor at the court of the Cappadocian magnate Eustathius Maleinus, some time must have elapsed.

The crack troops of the Byzantine army—the Armenians, who supported Sclerus, and the Iberians, who backed Phocas—were now among the adversaries of Basil II. With the unfavorable attitude of the military and the landed aristocracy, the opposition within the Church, and the hostility of the population of the Empire, Basil must have realized that the alliance against him by the two Bardases meant the beginning of the end of his reign. He tried to prevent the cooperation of these forces, but in order to save the throne it was necessary to oppose the armies of the usurpers with some superior force. It seems likely that Basil had begun negotiations with the Russian ruler before the new rebellion, since the issues were settled and help was forthcoming in

<sup>101</sup> Djeyhan (Ğaihan) is the Arabic name for the river Pyramos in Cilicia. The suggestion of Honigmann (*Die Ostgrenze* [note 28 *supra*], 103, 153) that this meeting took place at the beginning of September is unacceptable, because there would have been no time for a second meeting of the two Bardases. I share his opinion that they met on the Djeyhan river, but Yaḥyā's text and the mention in Asoghik, III, § 14, allow us to conclude that there was a district of the same name situated in the area of the river basin in the vicinity of Melitene; cf. Rozen, *Imperator*, 2, 23, 85, 193. According to W. Tomaschek, *Zur historischen Topographie von Kleinasien im Mittelalter*, SBWien, Phil.-hist. Kl., 124 (1891), Abh. VIII, p. 68, the Arab geographers meant by "Djeyhan" only the important crossing of this river at al-Massisa (Mamistra).

<sup>102</sup> According to the record of Yaḥyā (in PO, 23, pp. 421–22; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 23), Roman Sclerus defected to the Emperor Basil after the conclusion of the conspiracy, but before his father's first meeting with Phocas. From *Scylitzae synopsis*, 335, we know that Sclerus himself inspired his son's departure to secure the family interests in the event of defeat. Among Scylitzes' sources was the chronicle of the house of Phocades, wherein Roman's act was thus interpreted; cf. Každan, *Iz istorii* (note 62 *supra*), 106–23.

<sup>103</sup> *Scylitzae synopsis*, 332; Yaḥyā, in PO, 23, p. 421; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 23. The accurate record of the Arab historian, who gives both a Moslem and a Seleucidian date pointing out the feast day and the day of the week, indicates a source from Antioch, where this event was well known (see *supra*, p. 12ff.). Holy Cross day was exceptionally suited to the proclamation of an emperor. The reliability of Yaḥyā's date is attested in the manuscript tradition of his chronicle, as witnessed by his own statement that "the revolt [of Phocas] lasted one year and seven months," exactly the time between September 14, 987 and April 13, 989 (Yaḥyā, in PO, 23, p. 426; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 25). In Vasil'evskij's opinion (*Trudy*, II, 81), the proclamation of Bardas Phocas as emperor on August 15, 987, at the court of the Maleini was "at first the secret deed of conspirators."

<sup>104</sup> *Scylitzae synopsis*, 336; Asoghik, III, § 25. Tyropoion is identified with Tyriaion in Byzantine Pisidia near Iconium (present-day Ilghin, near Konya); see W. M. Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor* (London, 1890), 141–42, 355–56, and map facing p. 197. According to Schlumberger (*L'Épopée byzantine* [note 15 *supra*], I, 694), the fortress Jerôs mentioned by Asoghik could be a corruption of the name Tyriaion (Tyriaïos, Teraos).

such a short time. After Basil received the news of the agreement between the two pretenders to the throne, these earlier contacts with Kiev assumed major importance. He sent envoys to Kiev invested with full powers to ensure success not only in procuring military aid but also in winning over Vladimir to the cause of the Macedonian dynasty. This mission must have set out, at the latest, after the Emperor received the news of the betrayal of Bardas Phocas, that is, in May or June 987. At this time, the most favorable for crossing the Black Sea, it would have taken no more than four to six days at a moderate speed of four or five knots to cover approximately 500 nautical miles. The 900-kilometer route up the river Dnieper to Kiev, at a speed of about twenty-five kilometers a day, could be traversed in about forty days. Counting possible delays, the journey could have lasted fifty days, or less if the Russes, informed of the envoys' approach, had sent a convoy to the rapids on the Dnieper, 500 kilometers below Kiev, to provide protection against the Patzinaks. For the rest of the journey the important members of the embassy could have gone by horseback, which would have shortened their journey by at least ten days. Thus, the Byzantine envoys probably traveled from Constantinople to Kiev in not less than thirty and not more than fifty days,<sup>105</sup> arriving in Kiev in July or August. A later arrival in autumn is possible, but information, mentioned below, convinces me that the envoys who contracted the treaty of alliance arrived in Kiev sometime during the summer months of 987. At any rate, we can no longer accept the popular view, based on a literal interpretation of the chronological sequence of events according to Yahyā, that envoys were sent to Kiev after the armies of Bardas Phocas reached the waters separating Asia from Europe.<sup>106</sup>

Earlier attempts to gain military aid from the Rus' could have been made in connection with a campaign against Bulgaria which would at least have ensured peace in the European area during the action against Sclerus, but in

<sup>105</sup> On travel conditions between Constantinople and Kiev, see Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *DAI*, II, *Commentary*, 31–32, 37–40, 48, 54–55 (rep. D. Obolensky, *Byzantium and the Slavs: Collected Studies* [London, 1971], V, same page nos.); A. Poppe, "La dernière expédition russe contre Constantinople," *Byzantinoslavica*, 32 (1971), 239–45. I assumed less favorable sailing conditions for my estimate for crossing the Black Sea. In summer, in good weather, such a voyage took two to three days and nights, and, at the narrowest point (144 miles), eighteen to twenty hours. Cf. D. Berenbejm, "O puti Grekov čerez Černoje more," *SovArh* (1958), pt. 3, pp. 201–3. In June 1389, Pimen, Metropolitan of Moscow, crossed the Black Sea between Caffa and Sinope (ca. 200 miles) in five days because of adverse winds (PSRL, XI [1897], 97). For the average speed of inland and sea navigation, cf. P. Ludwig, *Untersuchungen über die Reise und Marschgeschwindigkeit im XII. und XIII. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1897), 21, 122, 131–32, 144, 155–59, 163, 184–85.

<sup>106</sup> Rozen, *Imperator*, 197–98; and, for instance, Šmurlo, "Kogda," 136, who states that Yahyā testifies categorically that the Emperor Basil had sent the envoys to Kiev only when Bardas Phocas reached Chrysopolis, which could have happened no sooner than the end of the year 987. Cf. Ostrogorskij, "Vladimir" (note 2 *supra*), 33; Vernadsky, *Kievan Russia* (note 10 *supra*) (rep. 1972), 63. There is no discrepancy between Yahyā and Psellus, who state that not long before the rebel army had reached the Propontis and made their entrenchment secure, "a picked band of Scythians had come to help him [Basil] from the Taurus" (Psellus, *Chronographia*, I, §§ 12, 13: ed. Renauld, vol. I, p. 9; trans. Sewter, p. 17). Yahyā's record (in PO, 23, pp. 423–25; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 25–26) on the alliance of Basil and Vladimir is his own interpolation. At the point in the narrative where the army of Bardas Phocas reached Chrysopolis, Yahyā, before giving the account of Basil's victory at Chrysopolis, saw fit to clear up this unexpected turn of events. It is implicit from Yahyā's record that to prepare such a coup would have taken a great deal of time.

the summer of 987 much more was expected and much more was offered. Hence, the embassy's rank had to be in accordance with the importance of the affairs that were to be discussed. Theophylact, the metropolitan of Sebaste, known for his above-mentioned conflicts with the Armenian clergy, was probably at the head of the deputation. In the spring of 987 after the uprising of Sclerus, who sympathized with the Armenians, he had taken refuge in the capital and thereby linked his fate with that of the Macedonian dynasty. Asoghik's statement that the metropolitan of Sebaste acted as envoy in the matrimonial negotiations of Basil's sister, combined with the happenings of 987 and 988, the establishment of the metropolitanate of Rus' between 970–97, and the transfer of the metropolitan Theophylact from Sebaste to the see of 'Ρωσία during the reign of Basil Porphyrogenitus,<sup>107</sup> indicates that this Church dignitary, devoted to the Emperor, was eminently suited to diplomatic as well as missionary activities. The success he achieved made him the first ambassador of the Empire to the court of the Kievan ruler, and the first leader of the Old Russian Church.

In the agreement between Basil and Vladimir, three essential problems, the acceptance of Christianity by the Rus' and their ruler, his marriage to Anna Porphyrogenita, and effective military aid for the Empire, were discussed and decisions binding on both parties were made as follows:

1. Vladimir declared in his own name as well as in the name of his subjects, "the boyars and all the people in the Russian land," his willingness to be baptized. To propagate and to strengthen the Christian faith it was decided to establish a separate Russian eparchy, a metropolitanate subordinate to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Byzantine party offered to organize it, and the Russian ruler gave assurances of his protection and promised to provide and maintain conditions necessary for its activity.

2. Through the mediation of their envoys, the two Emperors, Basil and his brother Constantine, expressed their readiness to become kinsmen of the ruler of the Rus' by giving him their sister Anna in marriage upon his acceptance of the Christian faith.

3. Vladimir undertook an obligation to give military aid against any enemies of the Empire, and to send to the Bosphorus, as soon as possible, several thousand warriors to fight the army of the usurpers.<sup>108</sup> It was also agreed that

<sup>107</sup> See note 30 *supra*, and Honigmann, "Studies" (note 31 *supra*), 142–58; Poppe, *Państwo*, 25–33.

<sup>108</sup> The information of Asoghik, III, § 43 (see *supra*, p. 203), about 6,000 warriors has usually been accepted as reliable, although given this historian's predilection for the numbers 3, 6, 12, and their multiples, this figure 6,000 should be considered more as an approximate than as an exact number. It is of interest that the 6,000 warriors were associated by the Armenian historian with the crack troops. Cf. Asoghik, II, § 3; III, §§ 41, 43 (*Vseobščaja istorija*, 85, 194, 200; *Histoire universelle*, 156, 164; *Des Stephanos von Taron*, 84, 205, 211). Although I have reservations about the accuracy of Asoghik's account, I am not inclined to believe that he exaggerated the size of the Russian detachment. The *Tactica* of Leo VI, concerned with the art of war, estimated the Byzantine forces from all the themes to be 40,000, but recommended that operations be conducted with two or three basic units, each 4,000 strong. In the tenth–eleventh centuries, operational units were 4,000–6,000 each and the whole Byzantine operational force was a combination of several such units. Cf. H. Delbrueck, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 2nd ed., III (Berlin, 1923), 197, 208–9; F. Lot, *L'Art militaire et les armées*

Russes would subsequently undertake military action in the Crimea against Cherson because of its declaration for the usurpers.

Beside the basics of the alliance there were other less urgent items, essential to ordinary Byzantino-Russian contacts, which can also be seen in the treaties preserved from the tenth century: commercial terms and privileges, the status of Russian and Byzantine newcomers in both countries, etc.

It was of utmost importance to fix the dates for the implementation of the agreements reached. The speedy arrival in Constantinople of a strong battle contingent of Rus' was essential to the Byzantine party. If the alliance was presumably contracted in September, it would have been quite possible to send a detachment of several hundred in the autumn before navigation ceased, but it would have taken several months to prepare and send an armada of several thousand warriors. This must have been the size of Vladimir's military forces, which were scattered over his large territory. Bearing in mind the security of his own country, Vladimir could not have put at Byzantine disposal all of his armed forces.<sup>109</sup> He would have had to raise additional troops, drawing them from various parts of his state and probably hiring Varangians from Scandinavia as well. A lot of time would have been required to equip properly such an expeditionary force, to float shipping timber, and to build and outfit 120 to 150 ships for inland and sea navigation each with forty to sixty warriors on board.<sup>110</sup> The agreement must have been reached not later than September in order to give Vladimir enough time to raise a corps to start south as soon as conditions were favorable, that is, at the end of April or in May, when the high water level allowed easier navigation of the rapids by heavy warships. A voyage down the Dnieper would last twenty to thirty days, the cabotage on the Black

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*au Moyen Âge en Europe et dans le Proche Orient*, I (Paris, 1946), 62–73; V. V. Kučma, "'Taktika L'va' kak istoričeskij istočnik," *VizVrem*, N.S. 33 (1972), 84. Cf. also Aristakes of Lastivert, *infra*, note 141. The striking force of Basil II in the conquest of Bulgaria was surely about 15,000 strong, and judging from the distribution of spoils in 1016 the Russes must have comprised half of the troops. Cf. *Scylitzae synopsis*, 355; Cedrenus, II, 465; A. Dain, "Le partage du butin de guerre d'après les traités juridiques et militaires," *Actes du VI<sup>e</sup> Congrès International d'Etudes Byzantines, Paris, 27 juillet–2 août, 1948*, I (Paris, 1950), 347–54. To bring about the collapse of the rebellion, the confederate Rhôs contingent in 988 was probably as large as that which fought a quarter of a century later.

<sup>109</sup> The mobilization potential of the Kievan state about the year 1000, with an estimate of one warrior for every ten families and a population of five million, was about 80,000 soldiers, but actually it took considerable effort to put 20,000 in the field. The Russian striking force at the beginning of Svjatoslav's Balkan campaign in 968 consisted of about 12,000 warriors, as did the armada of the last Russian raid in 1043 against Constantinople. In the civil war between Vladimir's sons, Iaroslav of Novgorod started against Svjatopolk of Kiev with 4,000 troops; among them were 1,000 mercenary Varangians. On the social structure and size of the Old Russian armed forces, see B. D. Grekov, *Kievskaja Rus'* (Moscow, 1953), 320–53; T. Wasilewski, "Studia nad składem społecznym wczesnośredniowiecznych sił zbrojnych na Rusi," *Studia Wczesnośredniowieczne*, IV (Wrocław, 1958), 301–87, reviewed by H. Łowmiański, in *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 67 (Warsaw, 1960), 436–47; *idem*, *Początki Polski Z dziejów Słowian w I tysiącleciu n.e.*, III (Warsaw, 1967), 458–62.

<sup>110</sup> For the annual making and equipping of boats (*monoxyla*) for Kievan trade with Constantinople, see Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *DAI*, § 9, pp. 56–57, and *Commentary*, pp. 23–25, 35–37. Cf. Vernadsky, *Kievan Russia* (note 10 *supra*), 28–31. The Emperor-bookman in his *De cerimoniis*, lib. II, cap. 44 (Bonn ed. [1829], I, 660), describes seven ῥως καράβια with a crew of 415 men, sixty to a boat; the Primary Chronicle speaks of forty-man boats in a naval raid on Byzantium in 907 (Cross, *Chronicle*, 68). Psellus (*Chronographia*, VI, § 91) writes that for the naval expedition of 1043 the Russes "made boats large and small." Cf. Poppe, "La dernière expédition" (note 105 *supra*), 244 note 115, 249 and note 129.

Sea six days. A swift warfleet could thus make the voyage from Kiev to Constantinople in twenty-six to thirty days and even at a slower pace would have arrived in the Bosphorus in June.<sup>111</sup> There are grounds, therefore, for the opinion expressed in the literature that the Rus' troops arrived in Constantinople in the summer (not in the spring) of the year 988, but the suggestion that the troops were sent by land across Bulgaria<sup>112</sup> is not probable. First of all, such a march would have taken additional time; furthermore, there would have been no sense in draining the strength of the Rus' troops by forcing them to fight their way across the fields and gorges of Bulgaria when Basil needed them desperately on the outskirts of the capital.

There was no difficulty in deciding on a date for the baptism of Vladimir and his subjects, the aristocracy, the knights, and other inhabitants of Kiev. It should be remembered that a substantial number of the upper class and their households and many tradespeople were already Christians.<sup>113</sup> Some of the Byzantine envoys remained in Kiev to prepare the catechumens and to perform the rite of baptism that was to take place at a convenient time before the date, determined during the negotiations, of the arrival of Anna Porphyrogenita in Kiev. At the earliest, it could have been the summer of 988.

The giving of a Porphyrogenite in marriage within less than a year of the agreement may seem unlikely if compared with similar endeavors by the Ottonians: for three years Otto I carried on unsuccessful negotiations with Nicephorus Phocas for a Porphyrogenite for his son, whereas the negotiations for a Porphyrogenite for Otto III (995–1001) lasted more than six years.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> According to Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *DAI*, § 9, pp. 58–59, the Kievan trade flotilla went to Constantinople in June of every year. Military expeditions reached the Bosphorus in 860 on June 18, in 941 on June 8, and in 1043 in June or July. Cf. H. Grégoire and P. Orgels, "Les invasions russes dans le Synaxaire de Constantinople," *Byzantion*, 24 (1954), 141–45; *Scylitzae synopsis*, 430; *DAI, Commentary*, II, 37; G. G. Litavrin, "Еще раз о pohode russkih na Vizantiju v ijule 1043 g.," *VizVrem*, N.S. 29 (1969), 105–7; Poppe, "La dernière expédition," 240–45.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Vasil'evskij, *Trudy*, II, 118.

<sup>113</sup> On evangelization in Kievan Russia before 988, see N. Polonskaja, "K voprosu o hristianstve na Rusi do Vladimira," *ŽMNP*, 71 (1917), 33–80; Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions* (note 2 *supra*), 259ff.; Vlasto, *Entry*, 247–54. Cf. G. Ostrogorsky, "Vizantija i kievskaja knjaginja Ol'ga," in *To Honor Roman Jakobson*, II (The Hague, 1967), 1458–73.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. P. E. Schramm, *Kaiser, Könige und Päpste*, III (Stuttgart, 1969), 204–8, 218–20, 235–38; W. Ohnsorge, "Die Heirat Kaiser Ottos II mit der Byzantinerin Theophano (972)," *Braunschweigisches Jahrbuch*, 54 (1973), 25–34. They expressed the view that Otto I had been negotiating since 967 for the four-year-old Porphyrogenite Anna to be the bride of Otto II (cf. Schramm, *op. cit.*, 204; Ohnsorge, *op. cit.*, 32). Anna, the last child of the Emperor Romanus II, was not his only daughter, as Fr. Dölger believed (*BZ*, 45 [1952], 467–68), although he demonstrated correctly that Theophano could not have been the sister of Anna. G. Ostrogorsky (*Byzantion*, 7 [1932], 198) called attention to the testimony of *De ceremoniis*, lib. II, cap. 15 (Bonn ed., p. 597), that at least one child of Romanus and Theophano attended a palace reception on September 9, 957. Because their sons Basil II and Constantine VIII were born in 958 and 961 respectively, the child seated at the dessert table in 957 must have been a girl, at least three years old. (Cf. A. A. Vasiliev, "Hugh Capet of France and Byzantium," *DOP*, 6 [1951], 244.) It seems that Thietmar mentions her name in his chronicle (VII, 72): "from Greece Vladimir brought himself a wife named Helene, who was destined for Otto III and hereafter denied him." While he confuses facts, persons, and time, he did not invent them (cf. Thietmar von Merseburg, *Die Chronik*, eds. R. Holzmann and W. Trillmilch [Berlin, 1957], 432). It is likely that the elder daughter of Romanus II and Theophano was named for her paternal grandmother, the Empress Helena Lecapena, wife of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. So this Porphyrogenite Helena born about 954/55 could have been "the desired girl" requested in 967/68 by Otto for his son Otto II (cf. note 127 *infra*).



When the initiative was taken by an Emperor himself, matters proceeded more quickly. The marriage of Otto II and Theophano took place within a year and a half, although the bride was not a Porphyrogenite but only a relative of John I Tzimisces. Faced with the need to concentrate his whole military might in Bulgaria against Svjatoslav, the Emperor decided it was not advisable to continue military action against the Western Empire in Italy. In September 970 he began to negotiate with Otto I, and Byzantine envoys, equipped with full power to act, not only managed to negotiate a cessation of hostilities but also concluded a marriage contract. At the end of 971 Theophano left for the West, and on April 14, 972, she was married to Otto II in Rome.<sup>115</sup>

Tzimisces' temporary difficulties, which caused him to revise the policy of his predecessor toward the Ottos, were minimal compared to the sad plight of Basil II. Realizing his danger and the perilous situation of the Macedonian dynasty, Basil decided to break with tradition, and to give a legitimate daughter of an Emperor in marriage to a ruler from outside the borders of the Empire. Having contracted the marriage agreement of Anna and Vladimir, he was anxious to have it fulfilled without delay; with his sister in Kiev, he would be sure of his brother-in-law's effective support and could rely on the assistance of the Rus' troops in putting down the rebellion.

It was especially important to Vladimir that the marriage take place as soon as possible. This pagan King, ambitious architect of an extensive and dynamic state, yet to the heirs of the Roman Empire still a barbarian, had achieved an alliance that other Christian rulers could not. The court in Kiev did not avoid contacts with other countries, and the endeavors of the Ottos, as well as their meager success with the non-Porphyrogenite Theophano, who was received with discontent by many in the higher ranks of the Ottonian state, were known there. The periodic news of conversions of several Slav and Scandinavian dynasties had created a feeling of isolation, and contributed to a readiness, encouraged by some of the entourage of the Kievan ruler who were already converted, to incorporate Rus' in the family of Christian nations. The decision to convert, in the light of prospective relations with the Emperor of the Romans, was especially attractive. The Rus' King, on becoming a Christian, not only joined the European family of rulers, but at once gained a position of honor in this hierarchy<sup>116</sup> because of his marriage to a Porphyrogenite. The union of the Macedonian and Rjurikid houses, which contemporaries considered important, helped to lead to a historic turning-point in the Christianization of Rus'.

<sup>115</sup> Ohnsorge, "Die Heirat," 35-60.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. G. Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor and the Hierarchical World Order," *SIEERev*, 35 (1956), 5-14; F. Dölger, "Die Familie der Könige im Mittelalter," in *idem*, *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt* (Darmstadt, 1969), 34-69; A. Grabar, "God and the 'Family of Princes' Presided over by the Byzantine Emperor," *HSSt*, 2 (1954), 117-23; J. Shepard, "Some Problems of Russo-Byzantine Relations c. 860-c. 1050," *SIEERev*, 52, no. 126 (Jan., 1974), 26-30. However, in the light of the *princeps editio* of John Scylitzes, I must revise my interpretation that Vladimir was called the brother of the Emperor in the meaning of πνευματικός ἀδελφός, a member of the family of rulers (cf. A. Poppe, "Le prince et l'église en Russie de Kiev depuis la fin du X<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'au début de XII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 20 [1969], 110). As it now appears, the original reading was Βλαδιμηροῦ, τοῦ γαμβροῦ τοῦ βασιλέως (*Scylitzæ synopsis*, 354<sup>82</sup>), and Cedrenus replaced γαμβροῦ with ἀδελφοῦ (cf. Bonn ed., II, 464).

Since both parties were anxious to conclude the agreement without delay, the Rus' wedding party must have been sent to Constantinople that autumn. The treaty was to be ratified in the presence of Russian envoys by the Emperor himself.<sup>117</sup> Part of the Byzantine embassy, most of whom were ecclesiastics, remained in Kiev to make preparations and to baptize the Rus' ruler and his pagan attendants. The rest, together with the Rus' envoys and probably, as mentioned above, a detachment of several hundred troops, set out for Constantinople by the water route while it was still accessible to navigation.<sup>118</sup> Their arrival in the capital of the Empire in October, or at the latest at the beginning of November, can be determined by the fact that news of Vladimir's successful matrimonial negotiations reached the courts of western Europe in January 988.

In my opinion, some light is thrown on the chronology of the Russo-Byzantine negotiations by the abandonment by the King of France, Hugh Capet, of his attempt to obtain a Porphyrogenite bride for his son Robert. In a letter addressed to the Byzantine Emperors Basil II and Constantine, written just after the coronation of Robert on Christmas day 987, the king of the Franks offered friendship and an alliance and asked for the hand of *filiae sancti imperii* for his son.<sup>119</sup> The chronological arrangement of this letter, written *ex persona*, in the collection of correspondence of Gerbert of Aurillac, trusted secretary of the archbishop of Reims, also indicates the very end of the year 987 or very beginning of 988. Since shortly after that, probably even before the first of April 988, Robert married Suzanna, the widow of Arnulf II, count of Flanders, some researchers think that the letter was never sent to Constantinople,<sup>120</sup> that it was written by Gerbert of his own accord without the King's knowledge;<sup>121</sup> but this is not confirmed by any of the remaining eighty political letters written by Gerbert at the request of others, among them Hugh Capet.

<sup>117</sup> I assume that the procedure was similar to that in the treaty between Tzimisces and Otto I. Cf. Ohnsorge, "Die Heirat," 35, 37.

<sup>118</sup> Navigation on the Dnieper was no longer possible toward the end of November; Black Sea navigation was suspended between December and March. In Caffa, due to much risk, sailing was forbidden from December 1 until March 15. Cf. Berenbejm, "O puti" (note 105 *supra*), 203. In November, severe weather conditions made navigation very difficult; for example, in 1419 a voyage from the mouth of the Dniester to the Bosphorus (ca. 400 miles) took three weeks. But in October, travel by the Black Sea route would be normal: the Kievan sovereign Olga left Constantinople after the imperial reception on October 18, 957, and the Russian metropolitan Cyprian set out from Constantinople for home on October 1, 1389. Cf. M. N. Tihomirov, "Puti iz Rossii v Vizantiju v XIV-XV vv.," in *idem, Istoricheskie svjazi Rossii so slavjanskimi stranami i Vizantieju* (Moscow, 1969), 71-72; Poppe, "La dernière expédition" (note 105 *supra*), 29.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. the most recent critical edition with a short survey of opinions, ed. F. Weigle, *Die Briefsammlung Gerberts von Reims*, MGH, *Briefe*, II (Berlin, 1966), no. 111, pp. 139-40; English trans. and commentary in H. P. Lattin, *The Letters of Gerbert, with his Papal Privileges as Sylvester II* (New York, 1961), 151-52. For a more detailed interpretation, see D. and A. Poppe, "Dziewosłęby o pofirogenetkę Anne," in *Cultus et Cognition: In Honorem A. Gieysztora* (Warsaw, 1976), 451-68.

<sup>120</sup> Ch. Pfister, *Études sur le règne de Robert le Pieux* (Paris, 1885), 42-46; F. Lot, *Les derniers Carolingiens* (Paris, 1891), 218-19. Cf. K. Leyser, "The Tenth Century in Byzantine-Western Relationships," in *Relations Between East and West in the Middle Ages*, ed. D. Baker (Edinburgh, 1973), 41-42.

<sup>121</sup> J. Havet, *Lettres de Gerbert (983-997)* (Paris, 1889), 102; Cf. F. Lot, *Études sur le règne de Hugues Capet et la fin du X<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1903), 4 note 2.

Other scholars think that the letter was not sent because of the changed political situation.<sup>122</sup> Vasiliev, who devoted a special study to the contents of the letter, came to the conclusion that "if the authors of the message were well acquainted with the political situation of the Byzantine Empire in 988, they may have realized that this year was not appropriate for matrimonial negotiations and therefore abandoned their project."<sup>123</sup>

The complex manuscript tradition is reflected in two versions of Gerbert's collection of letters, essentially different in form, content, and purpose. Many controversial opinions have been expressed concerning the date and circumstances of the origin of both versions. Upon closer scrutiny, one can conclude from the common elements that one of the versions (the so-called copy *P*), which contains our letter, was a private one, not intended for publication, that Gerbert kept in the years 982–96; the other (codex *L*), in which thirty letters found in copy *P* are omitted, is a collection of Gerbert's writings and letters, intended for wider circulation, which were compiled either by him or shortly after his death in 1003.<sup>124</sup> The fact that the political contents of these thirty letters betray the too far-reaching efforts of the archbishop of Reims and his secretary on behalf of Hugh Capet and Theophano in their political game against the last Carolingians seems to show that they were not meant for wider distribution. The omission of the letter with which we are concerned from the collection intended for a wider circle of readers, whether it was removed during the reign of Capet himself or that of Robert the Pious, is for reasons of simple discretion quite understandable; indeed, a reminder of the ambitious but unsuccessful attempt of Capet and his son to enter the arena of European politics might have been considered an open affront to the sovereign, the more so if the letter had never been sent and was known to only a narrow circle of persons.

The initiative taken by Hugh was quite consistent with his far-reaching ambitions and his high opinion of his own royal status. He did not abandon it because of an unfavorable political situation in Byzantium, since, in fact, it was his understanding of the situation, which was extremely favorable for Capet's plans, which prompted the idea. The Byzantine matrimonial customs were too well known in the European courts for the King of the Franks, who had at his disposal such excellent and well-informed advisers as Gerbert, to risk ridicule under normal conditions. Gerbert obtained his information about the situation in the Eastern Empire from his correspondents in Rome. He was

<sup>122</sup> Weigle, *Die Briefsammlung*, 6, and *idem*, *Studien* (note 124 *infra*), in *DA*, 14 (1958), 202–3.

<sup>123</sup> Vasiliev, "Hugh Capet" (note 114 *supra*), 245; cf. also p. 233.

<sup>124</sup> Codex *L* = MS of the eleventh century: *Cod. Vossianus lat.* Q 54 from the Library of Leiden University. Copy *P* is the generally accepted designation of another MS of the eleventh century, which was owned by Pithoei in the sixteenth-seventeenth century and was lost after 1636. The contents of this MS are reconstituted on the basis of *cod. Vallicellanus* G 94 (ca. 1602) and the editions of J. Masson (1611) and A. Duchesne (1636), which have all used the perished copy *P*. Among numerous studies of the *P* and *L* tradition of Gerbert's letters are the basic works by N. Bubnov, *Sbornik' pisem' Gerberta kak' istoričeskij istočnik'*, pt. I: *O rukopisiah i redakcijah sbornika pisem' Gerberta* (St. Petersburg, 1888); F. Lot, *Etude sur les recueils des lettres de Gerbert*, BECh, 100 (1939), 8–62; and Fr. Weigle, "Studien zu Überlieferung der Briefsammlung Gerberts von Reims," *DA*, 10 (1953), 19–70; 11 (1955) 393–421; 14 (1958), 149–220; 17 (1961), 385–419.

also in regular contact with the Empress Theophano, who was related through Tzimisces to Bardas Sclerus and Bardas Phocas and therefore had reason to be interested in the development of the situation in her native land.<sup>125</sup>

Dux Hugh, who, on July 3, 987, had just begun to wear the crown, felt that the royal title of the newly founded dynasty needed additional validation. His intention to ennoble the family tree of the Capetians must have arisen in the last months of the year 987, during the preparations, forced upon the archbishop and the nobility, for the coronation of his son.<sup>126</sup> Hugh was hoping that the legitimate Emperors would be desperate enough to give away the Porphyrogenite for a guarantee of the security of Byzantine possessions in southern Italy. The wording *filia sancti imperii* came from the pen of that consummate diplomat, Gerbert. Although, according to custom, he did not mention the name of the bride,<sup>127</sup> it was clear that he had in mind Anna, who was related equally to both Emperors and was the only *nubilis virgo* at that time who had been born in the purple (March 13, 963). Hugh could not have planned the engagement of his son to one of Constantine's daughters, Eudocia or Zoe, born about 978/79.<sup>128</sup>

Since word of his projected marriage did not get beyond the discreet circle of those directly concerned, and since attempts were undertaken at once to marry Robert to the widow of Arnulf II, to form a stronger union between Flanders and the Frankish kingdom, news of the betrothal of Anna and the Rus' ruler must have reached France shortly after the letter had been written, that is, at the beginning of or during January 988.<sup>129</sup> In order to have reached

<sup>125</sup> Her uncle, John Tzimisces, was related through his mother to the Phocades, and his first wife Maria was a sister of Bardas and Constantine Sclerus. The second daughter of Otto II and Theophano was named Sophia, apparently after her maternal grandmother. According to A. Rauch's likely supposition, Theophano was the daughter of Constantine Sclerus and Sophia who was a sister of Bardas Phocas; quoted in Schramm, *Kaiser* (note 114 *supra*), 240–41; P. Charanis, "The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire," *Byzantinoslavica*, 22, 2 (1961), 220, 223–25. For a detailed survey of opinions regarding the lineage of Theophano, see W. H. Rüdert von Collenberg, "Wer war Theophano?," *Genealogisches Jahrbuch*, 4 (1964), 49–71.

<sup>126</sup> *Richeri Historiarum libri IIII*, ed. G. Weitz (Hannover, 1877), 133–34 (*lib. IV*, 12, 13). Cf. Weigle, *Die Briefsammlung* (note 119 *supra*), 140–41; Lattin, *The Letters* (note 119 *supra*), 153.

<sup>127</sup> Perhaps this custom explains why Liutprand of Cremona, head of the matrimonial embassy of 968, in his speech to Nicephorus Phocas (*Legatio*, VII) asking for "a daughter of Emperor Romanus and Empress Theophano" to marry Otto II, did not mention her name.

<sup>128</sup> Of his three daughters, the eldest, Eudocia, born in 977/78 and pock-marked from the age of six, was sent to a convent. Neither Zoë, born about 979, nor Theodora, a few years younger (cf. Psellus, *Chronographia*, II, §§ 4, 5; VI, § 160; N. Skabalanovič, *Vizantijskoe gosudarstvo i cerkov' v' XI vėkė* [St. Petersburg, 1884], 10–11), was at that time of marriageable age. If Hugh Capet had Zoë in mind, the sudden abandonment of his intentions without waiting for an answer would be incomprehensible. That Anna must have been considered as a possible bride for Robert shows also that Hugh was asking not for *filia Constantinini imperatoris*, but for *filia sancti imperii*. Cf. Vasiliev, "Hugh Capet" (note 114 *supra*), 245.

<sup>129</sup> I assume that the letter was not sent because an answer was not expected. Legations from Western Europe to Byzantium in the ninth and tenth centuries lasted about one year. Embassies going and returning within six to eight months were an exception. Cf. V. Menzel, *Deutsches Gesandtschaftswesen im Mittelalter* (Hannover, 1892), 199–204. All data appear to connect King Robert's marriage to Rosala-Suzanna of Flanders with the year 988, although the terminus ante quem accepted so far for this marriage, April 1, 988, is not reliable because the document bearing that date is a forgery. Cf. *Diplomata Belgica ante annum millesimum centesimum scripta*, eds. M. Gysseling and A. C. Koch, I, *Textes* (Brussels, 1950), no. 71, pp. 175–77; and, in detail, Poppe, "Dziewosłoby" (note 119 *supra*), 456–62.

Reims or the court in Compiègne by then, the news must have left Constantinople not later than October or the beginning of November, since a messenger traveling at an average speed of about fifty kilometers a day would have required fifty-five to sixty days, or a little more, to cover (via the court of Theophano?) the distance of about 2650 kilometers.<sup>130</sup> If the French project was abandoned because of the news, this would provide additional proof that the Russo-Byzantine agreement in Kiev was reached not later than September, since the Rus' wedding embassy needed thirty to thirty-five days for the journey to Constantinople.

Elsewhere in this study I have discussed the time necessary to prepare an expeditionary force in Kiev and have shown that it could not have arrived in Byzantium before June 988. The date of the battle of Chrysopolis in the summer of 988, in which the Rus' troops took part, has been accepted as the terminus ante quem for their arrival, but the precise date of the battle still remains to be determined. In examining this question, I wish to point out that there is another possibility for fixing the approximate time of arrival of the Rus' troops in the capital.

After Bardas Phocas proclaimed himself emperor in Cappadocia in September 987, his armies occupied the whole of Asia Minor and reached the straits separating it from Europe. The occupation of the vast Asiatic provinces of the Empire must have taken several months, especially since the adherents of the imprisoned Bardas Sclerus had to be won over, or at least neutralized. It would seem, therefore, that most of Phocas' forces must have reached the straits in the summer of 988 and prepared to cross in two groups. One group pitched camp directly across from the capital, on the hills surrounding Chrysopolis (Skutari), and the other laid siege to Abydus on the Hellespont, the only bridge-head of Basil II in Asia.<sup>131</sup> After Phocas' troops had arrived in the suburbs of Constantinople, Basil sent one of his few loyal commanders, the magister Gregory the Taronite, by sea to Trebizond, from which he increased his detachment and set off in the direction of the Euphrates, that is, through territories densely populated by Armenians. This was a diversionary tactic intended to raise a revolt in the area occupied by Phocas. The fact that he chose Gregory the Taronite, an aristocrat of Armenian descent, and sent him through a province with a large Armenian population indicates that Basil II wanted to take advantage of the Armenians' discontent and distrust

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Ludwig, *Untersuchungen* (note 105 *supra*), 115–17, 179–93; Schramm, *Kaiser* (note 114 *supra*), 252–53.

<sup>131</sup> That the occupation of Asia Minor was carried out in stages is reflected in one of Yahyā's Antiochan sources, which recorded the arrival of Phocas' army at Dorylaion, about eighty miles southeast of Nicaea and over 200 miles east of Abydus. I conclude that the siege of Abydus by Phocas, emphasized in Leo Diaconus, p. 173, and in *Scylitzae synopsis*, pp. 336–37, was unknown to Yahyā or omitted in a summary of his sources. Nevertheless, from his record that Phocas "dominated the land of the Greeks to Dorylaion and to the sea, and his army reached as far as Chrysopolis" (Yahyā, in PO, 23, p. 422; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 23), it seems clear that only after the seizure of Dorylaion was it possible to reach and besiege "the key to the Byzantine capital"—Abydus. On the importance of Abydus, cf. Tomaschek, *Zur historischen Topographie* (note 101 *supra*), 15–16.

of Phocas after the imprisonment of Sclerus.<sup>132</sup> Phocas sent his son Nicephorus at the head of the Iberian troops to eliminate this diversion from the rear. With the help of the Iberian ruler David of Tayk', a friend of Phocas, Gregory the Taronite's detachment was defeated. Shortly afterward, the Iberian troops, still concentrated in the region of the battlefields, received news of Basil's success at Chrysopolis.<sup>133</sup> Gregory's operation must have lasted several months if one considers the time Phocas needed to organize a counterattack, and it ceased approximately when Basil II had his first success in the West.

So, when did the battle of Chrysopolis take place? Asoghik mentions the year 437 of the Armenian cycle, that is, between March 24, 988, and March 23, 989. According to his account of the event, it appears that the battle was fought at the end of the year 437, but that at the beginning of the next year (after March 23, 989)<sup>134</sup> the decisive engagement against Phocas took place in the correctly dated battle of Abydus on April 13, 989. It appears from the account of Leo the Deacon, and somewhat less clearly from the description of Scylitzes, that there was only a short interval between the two battles.<sup>135</sup> This interpretation of the text of both historians is fully confirmed in the letter, quoted by Yaḥyā, which Bardas Phocas sent to his son Leo, his governor in Antioch, asking him to remove Patriarch Agapetus from the town to stop his scheming. On Saturday March 2, 989, Leo managed to entice the patriarch, together with a large group of local dignitaries, from the city and to prevent their return.<sup>136</sup> It took special messengers from fifteen to eighteen days to travel 900 kilometers to deliver the letter, and it took Leo several days to arrange favorable circumstances for the execution of his plot. Phocas, therefore, must have dispatched his letter to Antioch at the beginning of February, shortly after receiving the news of the defeat of his army at Chrysopolis and

<sup>132</sup> It is not without significance that in 976–79 Gregory the Taronite took part in Sclerus' revolt. Cf. N. Adontz, "Les Taronites en Arménie et à Byzance," *Byzantion*, 10 (1935), 541–43; *ibid.*, 11 (1936), 21–22; Charanis, "The Armenians" (note 125 *supra*), 229.

<sup>133</sup> Yaḥyā, in PO, 23, pp. 424–25; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 24, 207–8. Asoghik, III, § 26, after his record of the battle at Chrysopolis (III, § 25) tells us that Phocas dismissed the Iberian troops and himself moved with the Greek army to the sea, that is, to Abydus. This enigmatic information and the time of the dismissal becomes clear in the light of Yaḥyā's record. The Iberian unit was sent under the command of Nicephorus Phocas to fight against Gregory the Taronite, but far from all the Iberians were dismissed to the east: we know from Psellus, *Chronographia*, I, §§ 15, 17, that the best Iberian units fought at Abydus. No doubt Asoghik's record reflects the contemporary opinion that the absence of those Iberians who were sent to the east tipped the scales at Abydus.

<sup>134</sup> Asoghik, III, §§ 25, 26 (*Histoire universelle*, 130; *Vseobščaja istorija*, 179; *Des Stephanos von Taron*, 189). I accept the long forgotten interpretation of the Armenian historian by Vasil'evskij, who dated the battle at Chrysopolis to February or the very beginning of March 989 (cf. *Trudy*, II, 197), while at the same time trying to contribute some new arguments. Schlumberger was the first to adopt Vasil'evskij's opinion in his exposition of the events, but also wrote: "La victoire de Chrysopolis eut peut-être lieu dès l'été de l'an 988 et précéda ainsi de plusieurs mois celle d'Abydos" (*L'Épopée byzantine* [note 15 *supra*], I [1896], 733–34, 745; 2nd ed. [1925], 655, 663).

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Leo Diaconus, 173–74, whose record seems more precise than *Scylitzae synopsis*, 336–38. Psellus, *Chronographia*, I, §§ 13–15, presented the first combat at Chrysopolis as a direct prelude to the main battle at Abydus, but knowing his predisposition to generalize, it would be risky to draw any conclusions.

<sup>136</sup> Yaḥyā, in PO, 23, p. 425; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 24–25, 209. The report that Leo Phocas was in rebellion in Antioch until November 1, 989, is of local origin.

after becoming aware of the new situation and the changes in public opinion. So it can be assumed that the battle of Chrysopolis took place in the second half of January or at the very beginning of February 989.

At this time, or at the most two weeks later, Gregory the Taronite was defeated. But he had accomplished his task, drawing away some of the Iberian troops from the western front and depriving Phocas of them in the decisive battle of Abydos. His expedition from Constantinople was inspired by the arrival of several thousand Rus' warriors in Constantinople, when the Emperor launched an offensive. After the approaching Rus' armada broke through the blockaded passage of the Bosphorus to the Black Sea, it was possible to send Gregory the Taronite by sea to Trebizond with a small detachment. It was not until then that the Emperor could spare such a detachment without weakening the defense of the capital. As his campaign had to last at least several months, but no longer than six or seven, it can be assumed that Gregory the Taronite set out at the Emperor's order in the summer of 988 after the arrival of the Rus' troops.

From this time until the battle of Chrysopolis was about half a year, which proves that Basil II was a good commander, having learned well the lesson taught by the Bulgars. Psellus stressed the effort put into the preparation of the Rus' troops and the other detachments for the offensive.<sup>137</sup> The newly arrived Russes were not immediately sent into battle, but were given time to get accustomed to the new conditions and, by joining with the rest of the Emperors' armies, to form one operating force. Individual detachments were drilled and maneuvers in groups were carried out, stressing the cooperation of the different units. From the description given by Asoghik of the battle at Chrysopolis, it is apparent that the whole operation had been well drilled, and its success was due to attacking the enemy unawares. At night, under cover of darkness, a very large unit had crossed the Bosphorus. Taking advantage of the hilliness of the area and of not being recognized, they approached the rear of the enemy's fortified camp at daybreak in order to attack when the usurper's army was distracted by a sham attack of battleships and Greek flamethrowers.<sup>138</sup>

In choosing winter to open the attack, the resistance of the northern allies to cold was taken into consideration.<sup>139</sup> The small, agile, and silent Rus' war boats were, in comparison to the Byzantine ships, very well suited to capitalizing on the element of surprise, hence the idea of a secret landing operation. In taking his time to prepare for the operation, Basil was aware of the signif-

<sup>137</sup> Psellus, *Chronographia*, I, § 13; cf. also his estimation of the Emperor Basil as a commander-in-chief (I, §§ 32–33, vol. I, pp. 20–21). It seems that the experience of his first successes at Chrysopolis and Abydos influenced his military thought and actions.

<sup>138</sup> See Asoghik, III, § 25 (*Histoire universelle*, 130; *Des Stephanos von Taron*, 188–89; *Vseobščaja istorija*, 178–79). Cf. Leo Diaconus, 173–74. For the classes of Byzantine warships, see H. Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer* (Paris, 1966), 408–18; E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland* (Berlin, 1966), 135–50.

<sup>139</sup> The winter is usually mild on the Bosphorus. In January the temperature is from 0° to + 4° C, rarely –5° C. Cf. Psellus' remark (I, § 32) that Basil II waged campaigns against custom, disregarding the season, whether it was hot or cold.

icance for morale of an initial success. Upon hearing the news of Chrysopolis, the allies began to desert Phocas.<sup>140</sup>

Since both parties needed time to collect their forces on the Hellespont, the battle on April 13 took place ten to twelve weeks after Chrysopolis. Basil intended to eliminate the concentration of enemy forces and to open a water route for freight ships. After achieving this, he intended to measure his strength against Phocas himself. The latter, aware that after the defeat of his army at Chrysopolis time was working against him, quickly directed his forces by land and by sea toward Abydus. A surprise attack from the sea and the burning of the usurper's fleet, which was moored on the coast, shows that here, too, the advantages of the Rus' boats were exploited. The death of the hitherto invincible commander, Phocas, on the battlefield sealed Basil's victory.<sup>141</sup>

At the time the Empire was torn by civil war, three events of differing importance were taking place in the north: the conversion of Rus', the marriage of Vladimir and Anna, and the siege and conquest of Cherson by the Russes. The questionable credibility of the so-called Cherson legend as a historical source for the conversion of Rus' applies also to the time sequence and the place of the events that it suggests. Not only does our entire argument weigh against the theory that the baptism of the Russes and Vladimir's marriage to the Porphyrogenite took place in Cherson, but, as we shall see below, an analysis of other Old Russian records also testifies against it. The Cherson legend omitted the real reason for Rus' action against Cherson, and presented the city as a glamorous place in which important ceremonies were held. But in reconstructing the history of these years, the legend recorded details of the siege and conquest of the city, still fresh in the memory of the eleventh century, and its part in the Christianization of Rus'. The spoils of war, holy relics, church objects, and icons urgently needed for the newly erected temples in Kiev, were sent north, as were numerous priests of Cherson, most likely not of their own accord.<sup>142</sup>

But of all these events, only the date of the conquest of Cherson, between April 7 and July 27, 989 (6497), is certified by the sources. The collapse of the

<sup>140</sup> David of Tayk' and two sons of Bagrat, princes of Armenian origin occupying the theme of Chaldia, had withdrawn 2,000 riders on the pretext that they had fulfilled their task, which was to defeat Gregory the Taronite. The Iberian warriors commanded by Nicephorus Phocas had fallen as well. See Yahyā, in PO, 23, pp. 424–25; and in Rozen, *Imperator*, 24, 79–80. Cf. Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze* (note 28 *supra*), 149–55.

<sup>141</sup> The information that Basil shared his forces with two armies and that the battle of Abydus consisted of two operations follows from the accounts of Leo the Deacon and Asoghik. In the first stage, the troops annihilated Phocas' navy, defeated a number of his units, and threatened an encircling maneuver. Then began the battle between the main body of Phocas' army and Basil's forces, which had crossed the Hellespont some time before and were camped at Abydus. See Leo Diaconus, 174; Asoghik, III, §§ 15–17; *Scylitzae synopsis*, 337–38. The Armenian historian Aristakes of Lastivert wrote shortly after 1072 that Basil won the victory over Bardas Phocas when, with "only four thousand men, he crossed the sea at night and attacked the innumerable army of the usurper." Cf. *Povestvovanie Vardapeta Aristakesa Lastivertci*, trans. K. N. Juzbašjan (Moscow, 1968), 64. Beneath this legend there is, it seems, an actual figure, not of the number of Basil's army at Abydus but of all his forces before the Russes came to his aid (cf. note 108 *supra*).

<sup>142</sup> Cross, *Chronicle*, 111–13, 116, and note 94 on pp. 247–48. Cf. *supra*, p. 207 ff. and notes 51, 52.



defense was probably due to the news of the defeat and death of Phocas at Abydos on April 13, 989. Because the Rus' troops reached the walls of the city by sea, it can be assumed that the siege began not later than the autumn of 988.<sup>143</sup> The Rus' operation against Kherson was based on an agreement of 987, probably confirmed in detail in the summer of 988, which reflected the intent of an article of the treaty of 944 providing that if the theme of Cherson broke loose from the sovereignty of the Empire the Rus' prince could wage war on it and could depend on Byzantine support.<sup>144</sup> This paragraph was in character with the general policy of the Emperors toward the rebellious city.<sup>145</sup> New treason made it timely once again, and Basil II decided to crush the political ambitions of Cherson. To punish the city severely, he allowed it to be sacked and virtually destroyed. We can deduce from the traces of ruin and fire that this was done by the conquerors after the city had already surrendered and opened its gates. Although it did not fall completely into decay, it never regained its former splendor, its economic significance, or its population.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Navigation on the Dnieper began about halfway through April, so in 989 the Russes could not get through before May. It is generally agreed that they reached Cherson by sea. Cf. Berthier-Delagarde, "Kak Vladimir" (note 92 *supra*), 244–50; B. D. Grekov, "'Povest' vremennykh let' o pohode Vladimira na Korsun'," in *idem*, *Izbrannye Trudy*, II (Moscow, 1959), 423–24; Vasiliev, *The Goths* (note 83 *supra*), 132–34.

<sup>144</sup> The obscure wording of this article gave rise to many different interpretations. Cf. N. Lavrovskij, *O vizantijskom elemente v jazyke dogovorov Russkikh s Grekami*, 2nd ed. (Warsaw, 1904), 141–43; G. Vernadsky, "The Rus' in the Crimea and the Russo-Byzantine Treaty of 945," *Byzantina-Metabyzantina*, I (1946), 257–58 (cf. also English trans. in Cross, *Chronicle*, 76); A. Zimin, in *Pamjatniki prava Kievskogo gosudarstva*, I (Moscow, 1952), 33, 38, 47; I. Sorlin, "Traité de Byzance avec la Russie au X<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, II (1961), 450, 460. They are not all convincing. The key to understanding this article of the treaty is in the phrase "i ta strana ne pokorjaetsja vam"—"if that country does not submit itself to you [i.e., the Russes]." I agree with the emendation proposed by A. A. Šahmatov: *nam/to us*, i.e., the Greeks, instead of *vam/to you*. See his reconstruction in *Povest' vremennykh let*, I (Petrograd, 1916), 57, 379. Frequent confusions of personal and possessive pronouns in the text of the treaties and the circumstances of their redaction in two Greek versions (the first was written in the name of the Byzantine party; the second formulated the articles of the treaty in the name of Rus', and therefore the pronouns of the first person were replaced by those of the second, and vice versa) and subsequent translation into Slavonic speaks for the possibility of error. See Šahmatov, "'Povest' vremennykh let'" (note 49 *supra*) 112, 115–17; 120; cf. Sorlin, *op. cit.*, 326–28. Then the correct sense of this article is as follows: "And concerning the country of Cherson and all the towns in that region the Russian prince does not have the right to wage war against them. But if that country does not submit itself to *us* (i.e., the Greek emperors), then if the Russian prince asks us for soldiers to wage war, we shall give him as many as he needs" (PSRL, I [1926], 50–51, II [1908], 39).

<sup>145</sup> With the emendation proposed in note 144, the contents of this article of the treaty of 944 will become clear and can be seen to correspond strictly to the Byzantine policy toward Cherson as formulated by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in *DAI*, §§ 42, 53 (cf. *supra*, p. 38 ff.), an emperor concluding the treaty with the Russes in 944. An example of this article in operation is the combined Russo-Byzantine action against Cherson in 1016 (cf. *Scylitzae synopsis*, 354, with commentary by E. Č. Skržinskaja, in *VizVrem*, N.S. 6 [1953], 266–67).

<sup>146</sup> The decline in population is estimated at nearly half. Some quarters of the city were left deserted in the eleventh century. Cf. A. L. Jakobson, *Srednevekovyj Herson v XI–XIV vv.* (Moscow, 1950), 12–15; *idem*, *Rannesrednevekovyj Hersones* (note 6 *supra*), 62–66, 282–83, 297, 361; *idem*, "O čislenosti naselenija srednevekovogo Hersonesa," *VizVrem*, N.S. 19 (1962), 160–61; Talis, *Iz istorii* (note 7 *supra*), 114 note 54; *idem*, "Voprosy periodizacii istorii Hersona v èpohu rannego srednevekov'ja," *VizVrem*, N.S. 18 (1961), 67–73. The decline of Cherson after 989 was believed to have been due to the aspiration of Kiev to weaken Byzantine positions on the north coast of the Black Sea. That Cherson ceased to mint its own money indicates not only the economic collapse of the city but also the fact that the Emperor deprived Cherson of this right.

Reconstructing the succession of events connected with the conversion of Rus', it is impossible to overlook some concurrence with the record of the "Memory and Eulogy of Vladimir," in which it is said: "After his holy baptism the blessed King Vladimir lived twenty-eight years. In the second year after baptism he went toward the rapids, in the third he captured the city of Cherson."<sup>147</sup> The difference in the succession and chronology of events in comparison with the Primary Chronicle presumes that the annalistic records of the "Memory and Eulogy," compiled in the thirteenth century, originated from another tradition. This tradition was still alive in Kiev in the second half of the eleventh century, as evidenced in both *Lives* of SS. Boris and Gleb.<sup>148</sup> If those twenty-eight years are subtracted from the date of Vladimir's death 6523 (1015), the date of his conversion is 6495 (March 987–February 988). That same year is indicated, too, from the record that Cherson was captured in the third year after Vladimir's baptism. Numbering from 6495, that would be the year 6497, the correctly attested date of the fall of this city. There is another record from the "Memory and Eulogy" indicating the year 6495 as the date of Vladimir's conversion: "Prince Vladimir was baptized in the tenth year after murdering his brother Yaropolk." The latter's death is dated therein to the year 6486 (978).<sup>149</sup>

The year 6495 for Vladimir's baptism appears to be a reliable tradition. The mission that remained in Kiev after the agreement had been concluded in September 6495 (987) had enough time to convert the Rus' ruler. Only a bishop could administer the sacraments of baptism and confirmation; so there must have been at least one of this rank at the head of the mission. As there was no need to hurry, the probable intention of the mission was to give the ceremony a solemn character. The day chosen for baptism was most likely Epiphany, the closest canonically approved day and the most suitable for the baptism of the ruler. So Vladimir's catechumenate would have been during Advent, and at

<sup>147</sup> Zimin, "Pamjat'" (note 43 *supra*), 72; Golubinskij, *Istorija*, 245. Views have repeatedly been expressed in favor of the chronological testimony of the "Memory and Eulogy" and against the dating in the Primary Chronicle (beginning with Golubinskij; cf., for instance, L. V. Čerepnin, "'Povest' vremennyh let,' ee redakcii i predšestvujuščie ej letoposnye svody," *Istoričeskie Zapiski*, 25 [1948], 332; Pašuto, *Vnešnjaia politika* [note 2 *supra*], 74; Vlasto, *Entry*, 257–58); but although critical verification of those dates has been lacking, it is becoming possible with the reconstruction of events on the basis of other sources.

<sup>148</sup> The anonymous *Skazanie* ("The Tale and Passion and Encomium of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb"), written about 1072, says that "Vladimir, when already 28 years had passed after the Holy Baptism, fell into a heavy illness" and soon died. The second hagiographer, the monk Nestor of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves, in his *Chtenie* ("Reading concerning the Life and Murder of the Blessed Martyrs Boris and Gleb"), written about 1080, named the year of the baptism but unfortunately an error appeared in sixteen MSS. The year 6490 (982) is given instead of 6495 (987), noted by only three MSS which, however, go back to the common, unpreserved archetype of the *Chtenie*, according to Bugoslavs'kij, the best judge of the manuscript tradition of the *Lives of Boris and Gleb*. Paleographically, this is just the error (omission of ε=5) which is most likely. See S. Bugoslavs'kij, *Ukrajino-rus'ki pamjatky XI–XVIII vv. pro knjaziv Borisa ta Gliba* (Kiev, 1928), 117, 139, 179–80, 183; and his unpublished study, *Drevnerusskie proizvedenija o Borisa i Glebe* (Moscow Institute of World Literature of the Academy of Sciences, 1939), 200–9. For an ample treatment of both *Lives*, see J. Fennell and A. Stokes, *Early Russian Literature* (London, 1974), 11–32.

<sup>149</sup> Zimin, "Pamjat'" (note 43 *supra*), 72. According to the Primary Chronicle, Yaropolk died in 6488 (980) and Vladimir was baptized nine years later.

Christmas the preliminary solemn ceremonies, such as the reciting of the Creed by the convert, could have begun. During the ritual of conversion, Vladimir was given a new Christian name,<sup>150</sup> Basil—the name of the Emperor of the Romans, his brother-in-law, and the elder brother in the family of rulers. The Byzantine Emperor patronized the ceremony of the conversion of the Rus' ruler and was, it can be said, *per procura*, his godfather. The day of the patron of both rulers, St. Basil the Great, which was at the same time a holiday, *Circumcisio Domini* (i.e., Sunday January 1, 988), could have been chosen to christen Vladimir after his godfather. On Epiphany the sacraments were fulfilled, and at the same time the Rus' ruler's still unconverted entourage was baptized.

It remains to solve the enigmatic note on Vladimir's voyage toward the Dnieper rapids in the year between two important events in his life, the baptism in the year 988 and the capture of Cherson in 989. Has this note been preserved in its original reading? If so, its brevity would suggest that the record was made at a time when the reason for the King's voyage toward the rapids was obvious.

What could have induced Vladimir to undertake this voyage, which definitely took place in the first half of 988, the period of navigability on the Dnieper, that is, from spring to autumn 988? Conjectures have been made that he set out to protect the corps en route to aid Basil from the Patzinaks while it crossed the rapids.<sup>151</sup> This should not be rejected *a limine*, though it seems that a battle contingent of several thousand would scarcely have needed such protection, much less the personal escort of the ruler. But there could have been another reason: the Rus' King could well have set out to greet his bride and to assure her entourage of safety during the dangerous crossing of the rapids. There are some grounds for this interpretation of the brief reference: there was from the mid-twelfth century on a custom for the Rus' princes to proceed to the rapids or even to the mouth of the river Dnieper to meet a bride and her attendants.<sup>152</sup> While Vladimir was awaiting the arrival of Anna at the rapids, guarded by his warriors, a fleet of Russian boats must have sailed down the Dnieper nearer to the mouth in order to take on board the Porphyrogenite and her suite. The interpretation of the record in the "Memory and Eulogy" that Anna arrived in the year following Vladimir's baptism, that is, in the summer of 988, is entirely in accordance with the argument proving both rulers' eagerness to consolidate their mutual obligations. It would not have been in the interests of the Macedonian dynasty to delay the union that was to cement the alliance.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Staerk, *Der Taufritus*, Puniet, in *Dictionnaire*, and Golubinskij, *Istoriia* (note 5 *supra*); E. Herman, "Baptême en Orient," in *DDC*, II (1937), 174–91; J. A. Jungmann, "Kathechumenat," in *LThK*, VI (1961), 51–54.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Zavitnevič, "O meste" (note 8 *supra*), 142; Šmurlo, "Kogda," 123, 145.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. The Laurentian Chronicle for the years 1153 and 1154, in *PSRL*, I, 340, 341. It has been suggested that this record from the "Memory and Eulogy" indicates that Vladimir was expecting the arrival of Anna at the rapids, but that "she did not come," and "incensed by Greek duplicity," Vladimir attacked Cherson. Cf. Levčenko, *Očerki*, 359–60; Vlasto, *Entry*, 259.

To fulfill the condition of conversion before the arrival of and the marriage to Anna, Vladimir could have had a choice of two other canonically approved days suitable for the baptism of adult neophytes: Easter and Pentecost. In the year 988 these holidays fell on April 8 and May 27 respectively. This possibility cannot be completely eliminated, but its acceptance contradicts the date of the "Memory and Eulogy," which has been shown to be reliable. It would also be difficult to explain the delay of Vladimir's catechumenate and the exclusion by the mission of such a date as the Epiphany, which was exceptionally suitable, because of its symbolism, to the baptism of a ruler. If all arguments accept the year 6495 for Vladimir's baptism, January 6 (988) appears to be the most likely day for that sacrament.

On either Easter or Pentecost in 6496 (988) the mass baptism of Kievans assembled in the waters of the Dnieper could have taken place. The Primary Chronicle has recorded a description of this event: "Then Vladimir sent his heralds throughout the whole city, proclaiming: 'If anyone does not come tomorrow to the river, be he rich or poor, pauper or slave, my adversary he will be.' Hearing this, people gladly went, saying joyfully: 'If this were not good, the king and the boyars would not have accepted it.'" <sup>153</sup> The metropolitan of Kiev, Ilarion, of equally ardent faith, appraised the event more soberly: "And no one dared to oppose his [Vladimir's] pious order. Even if someone were baptized not for love, he was baptized for fear of him who gave the order, because his piety was linked with authority." <sup>154</sup>

The question arises as to why the Cherson legend, which contained the events discussed here, was placed in the Primary Chronicle in the year 6496 (March 988-February 989). The legend itself, consistent with its character, did not mention any dates. For the author-compiler of the Primary Chronicle, the Cherson version was most reliable because it presented the most providential view of the conversion of Rus'. But as the author-compiler himself acknowledged, he was acquainted with other versions which were probably as brief and prosaic as the records in the "Memory and Eulogy" quoted above. He might have had at his disposal the date of at least one of these events, and on this basis placed the Cherson legend in the chronological scheme of the Chronicle. It might have been the year of Anna's arrival, or perhaps the start of the expedition to Cherson, but most probably it was the year of the baptism of crowds of Kievans. About the year 1060 there were people living in Kiev who still remembered "the baptism of the Russian land." <sup>155</sup> That memorable day in the year 6496 lived on in the memory of the next two or three generations. On that day on the banks of the Dnieper "a countless multitude assembled, stepped into the water, and stood there: some up to their necks, others to their chests in the water, the younger ones nearer the bank and others,

<sup>153</sup> PSRL, I, 117, II, 102; cf. Cross, *Chronicle*, 116.

<sup>154</sup> *Des Metropoliten Ilarion Lobrede auf Vladimir den Heiligen und Glaubensbekenntnis*, ed. L. Mueller (Wiesbaden, 1962), 105.

<sup>155</sup> "There was likewise another brother [i.e., monk] named Jeremy, who remembered the baptism of the Russian land," PSRL, I, 189, II, 180; Cross, *Chronicle*, 159-60.

adults holding children, waded, while the priests standing to the front said prayers."<sup>156</sup>

Historiography, so abundant in controversy, has inspired my attempt to reinterpret the tradition based on the sources, as well as to reconsider some widely-held opinions. If this attempt withstands critical examination, the possibility may arise for a new outlook on Russo-Byzantine relations and on different aspects of the history of both states at the end of the tenth century. Though the process of Christianization itself is not the subject of this study, it must be considered here for a moment, lest this analysis of the political circumstances of the baptism of Rus' be construed as support for the widespread, but to my mind erroneous, view that the conversion of Rus' was the act of the Byzantines.<sup>157</sup> The acceptance of Christianity was not imposed by chance and was not instigated by the Byzantine ruler. The date and the conditions of the baptism of the Rus' ruler and his entourage were the result of a concrete political situation. But the entry of the Kievan state into Christianity was preceded by more than a hundred years of penetration of Christianity into the area of the middle Dnieper and by its growing influence at the Kievan court, especially after the baptism of Vladimir's grandmother, Olga-Helena, the sovereign of Kiev.

The diplomatic initiative of Basil II was taken for political and military reasons resulting from the struggle with the usurpers. In the years 986–89 the Emperor was far from contemplating a real conversion of Rus'. The Macedonian dynasty, the Emperor's court, was most certainly eager to justify breaking the tradition, but at the time all this was being decided it was enough that the new relative and ally not be pagan, in name at least. If the idea of the conversion of Rus' had originated on the Bosphorus, a return to paganism would have been inevitable; this had happened shortly after the premature initiative of Photius in 867 and in the time of Olga's son Svjatoslav, when the need for a change was felt but the fear of a break with tradition was still very strong. This fear decreased in the following decades, and the circumstances created by Basil II made it much easier to put Vladimir's decision in an international context based on the alignment of real political power. The ruling class of the Kievan state was ripe politically for conversion and, thus, the permanence of that conversion was assured.

The conversion evoked no response on the part of Byzantine society. Basil's Rus' allies were looked upon as an apocalyptic force, threatening the Empire and its capital with extermination.<sup>158</sup> Byzantine historians maintained aston-

<sup>156</sup> PSRL, I, 117–18, II, 102–3; cf. Cross, *Chronicle*, 116–17.

<sup>157</sup> Cf., for instance, Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions* (note 2 *supra*), 270; Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 201.

<sup>158</sup> See *supra*, p. 212ff.; cf. Shepard, "Some Problems" (note 116 *supra*), 12–13. After finishing this paper, I became acquainted with the new and attractive hypothesis of A. Markopoulos on the much interpreted, enigmatic passage about the Rôds-Dromitai in Pseudo-Symeon. By plain emendation (ἀπ' ἡχώματος instead of ἀπηχώματος), and by assigning its text to the time of Basil II, the author sees in the crucial sentence of the passage a reference to the participation of the Russes in the events of

ishing reserve, even when the Emperor was victorious in battle thanks to the support of the Russes, thus proving the correctness of his choice. Psellus, in his history written in the middle of the eleventh century, treats the Tauroscythian barbarians as if Rus' were still a pagan country.<sup>159</sup> In the eleventh century, Byzantine political thought still did not include Rus' in its ideal Οἰκουμένη τῶν Ῥωμαίων.<sup>160</sup>

The initiative for Christianization developed in the ruling class of the Kievan state. The new religious ideology owed its further successes and its permanence to the upper class of Old Russian society. So the conversion of Rus' resulted not from the energy of the expansion of Byzantine civilization itself, but from effective attempts of the leading strata of Old Russian society to find stimuli in the Christian framework of values which would help to provide the answers to their own questions. It was a combination of ripe circumstances and correct decisions that achieved the epochal events of the years 987–88.

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988/89 and thereafter. This sentence, with a proposed translation, reads as follows: 'Ρῶς . . . διαδραμόντες ἀπ' ἡγήματος τῶν χρησαμένων ἐξ ὑποθήκης ἡ θεοκλυτίας τινὸς καὶ ὑπερσχόντων αὐτοὺς ἐπικέκληνται (Rōs . . . sont accourrus à l'appel de ceux qui les ont employés à la suite d'un conseil ou d'une prémunition divine et qui les ont retenus sous leur emprise). See Markopoulos, "Encore les Rōs-Dromitai et le Pseudo-Symeon," *JÖB*, 23 (1974), 90–99, esp. 97. Attention is called to the motivation behind the appeal for Russian aid, which was evidently such a shock to public opinion that the need arose to refer to θεοκλυτία—God's inspiration. Has Pseudo-Symeon retained a trace of the imperial propaganda of the time?

<sup>159</sup> Psellus, *Chronographia*, VI, §§ 90, 91, 96: ed. Renauld, vol. II, pp. 8–10; trans. Sewter, pp. 147–48, 150.

<sup>160</sup> After 988, the membership of Kievan Russia in the Byzantine Christian *oikoumene* became a fact, but its recognition by the Byzantine upper classes was long delayed, indicating once more how unpopular the Emperor Basil's close relationship (again referring to Psellus) was with "the barbarian world."

On the place of Kievan Russia in Europe and within the orbit of the Byzantine world, cf. the writings of recent years: Pašuto, *Vnešnjaja politika* (note 2 *supra*), 19–136; Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*; *idem*, *Byzantium and the Slavs* (note 105 *supra*), I, 52–60, II, 20–35; T. Wasilewski, *La place de l'Etat russe dans le monde Byzantine pendant le haut Moyen-Âge*, *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 22 (1970), 43–51; Shepard, "Some Problems" (note 116 *supra*), 27–33; I. P. Medvedev, "Imperia i suverenitet v srednie veka," in *Problemy istorii mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenij* (Leningrad, 1972), 421–22. About the contradictions in the Byzantine attitude toward Rus', cf. *supra*, p. 201 ff.